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INEVITABILITY AS A CRITERION OF ART

By JOHN TASKER HOWARD

WHAT renders music great? Is there any one quality inherent in a composition that alone can be considered responsible for its being a masterpiece? At first thought it would seem that this question could never be answered satisfactorily, and in the last analysis the answer will be incomplete; yet it is entirely possible that the day will come when the merits of art-works may to a large extent be measured by an unprejudiced qualitative analysis.

Some will say that any such appraisal, cold-blooded as it necessarily must be, would be the death of art; that if a masterpiece is to be measured for value, in the same way that a piece of land is measured for its length and breadth, there would be nothing left to appreciate. This is very true, for such an adjustment would go too far beyond the *Almost Perfect State* of our friend *Don Marquis*, and would enter realms of perfection to which none of us would wish to go. On the other hand, we may well regret that all criticism and discussion of the arts, particularly of music, should rely to such a great extent on personal opinion. We may admit that the development of taste in the individual in turn develops art through appreciation, but it is nevertheless deplorable that the only criterion we possess, aside from our own estimate of an art-creation, is the personal opinion of the majority of professional, and semi-professional, critics.

Of course, we can never hope entirely to escape from such a state of affairs, and we probably shall never desire that we should;

but were we able to find some standard of opinion on which we could all agree, it would materially aid us in distinguishing between the "good" and the "bad," if we may employ these terms, in music. Doctors determine the efficacy of a medical preparation by the character of the ingredients it contains, and by the proportions in which they are mixed. Why is it not as possible to pass on the *ingredients* of a musical composition, and their proportions, according to standards on which the great majority of music-lovers can agree?

By some it is held that a composition is great because it has stood the test of time. It requires very little thought to see the fallacy of any such reasoning. It is very true that great music invariably withstands the ravages of the years, but are we not dodging the issue by stating the effect rather than the cause? Music becomes immortal because it is great; the fact that a work has lived for a century or more cannot have made it great in the first place. The test, by which we judge, can by no means be responsible for the inherent qualities, the *ingredients*, which have enabled the composition successfully to pass that test. Moreover, we do not wish to wait a hundred years to judge our creators; the standards we seek to formulate are of such a character that they will enable us to form our opinions after several hearings of a work. To do our contemporaries justice in the present and in the flesh, is preferable to waiting for future generations to atone for our neglect by festivals of commemoration.

Others claim that the beauty of a composition, or of any other work of art, determines whether or not it possesses this quality of greatness. Beauty is an entirely relative quality, as relative as the taste of food, and any appraisal based on such a foundation would perhaps be more prejudiced than an opinion formed on any other basis. That which is beautiful to me may seem quite commonplace to my neighbor. I may consider the rose a beautiful flower; this same rose may so cause my neighbor to sneeze that he will think it hopelessly ugly and demand its removal from his presence. I may be a "cubist," and my more conservative contemporary may think admiration of the post-impressionists either a pose or total insanity. Opinions on beauty can no more be expected to coincide than opinions on ventilation, and the distinction between beauty and ugliness in art is fully as nice a distinction as the difference between a draught and a "breath of fresh air."

Nor can we say that the observance of the canons of form and structure, though its importance cannot be underestimated, is in

itself responsible for the excellence of a composition. Without such observance inspiration is helpless, but the technique of a composition is but the outer garment worn by the *inner* greatness of the work, even though it sometimes would seem a case of "clothes make the man."

Is there any word for the undefined quality? Can we find some inherent characteristic, the formula by which the "ingredients" have been mixed, put our finger on it, and point it out to our bewildered friends as the divine spark? Maybe we can, and maybe we cannot, but before we seek to find the inner secret, it will be necessary to reiterate some of the "ingredients" that the master "physicians" of music have used in "preparing" their greatest works.

Great works of art must possess *sincerity*. If the composer be insincere, his music will not ring true, there will be a shallowness in his work that will be apparent ere its course has been run, a hollowness that will turn music-lovers against his labor. The creator must create truthfully, according to his vision, or his imagination, else his work will be either false or grossly imitative.

Only second in importance is good *construction*. A composition with a flaw in its construction is like a chain with a weak link, or as a bucket, admirably constructed in all respects, except for a small hole in the bottom—so small that none would have noticed. What would have become of *Boris Godounoff* had Rimsky-Korsakoff's pen of revision failed to stop the leaks in Moussorgsky's structure? Moussorgsky is a pathetic example of the very point I wish to make, for even one of his biographers¹ admits that the great Russian exponent of realism

created laboriously, clumsily, imperfectly. It was truly owing to the power of his genius that he produced immortal pages: he always did this, when his inspiration was sufficiently powerful to record itself in its own way. . . . Complete works, even complete pages, which entirely satisfy all the aspirations of the listener, carrying him away and overawing him, are rare with Musorgsky; but there are some.

Had Moussorgsky possessed the patience to apply himself to the acquisition of a thorough technique, we might well stand in awe of the heights to which the *sincerity* of his genius would have carried him.

A great work must also possess *simplicity*, in the relative sense. The power of simplicity is proven by the appeal of the folk-song, the natural, spontaneous expression of its originators.

¹"Musorgsky, the Russian Musical Nationalist," by M. D. Calvocoressi: E. P. Dutton & Co.

Creators of the folk-song, the music of the people, spoke their musical thoughts in a way simple, natural to themselves, without experimentation in the fields of conscious effort. In that sense, an art-work must also have been *simple* for its composer, for had the labor of composition been strained beyond his powers, the composition would sound labored, forced, involved, and consequently neither spontaneous nor natural. On the other hand, the mere fact that the works of a genius like Wagner are complicated for the ears of the musically uneducated by no means robs them of their *simplicity*, for had they not been fundamentally simple, they would never have brought an understandable message to even the musically sophisticated. We may well contrast with such masterworks the struggling product of the neophyte, dabbling for the first time with his instrumentation. The material he seeks to weave into his work may be sincere, inspired and of the first order, yet he is so unfamiliar with his medium that the mechanical part of his task becomes a burden to him and an ear-sore to his listeners. All spontaneity is lost in the clumsy, futile effort to master the effects intended.

These, then, are at least three of the essential ingredients of a *great* composition; sincerity, simplicity (implying spontaneity), and technique (the power of mixing the ingredients effectively). But while these attributes are invariably found in masterworks created by genius, they are frequently present in music that is quite mediocre. There are many composers who possess a good technique, who are sincere, spontaneous, simple and natural, whose work fails to move, whose product music-lovers are wont to label "just another symphony," "just another opera," or "just another song, piano piece," whatever the case may be.

What, then, is the quality that has raised masterworks to their high level? Is it not their *inevitability*? We may never expect music-lovers to agree infallibly, even on this term, but when the uses to which we can put this word, in its relation to art in general and music in particular, have been examined, it will be found to afford far more common ground than standards of beauty, or of significance, in determining, in the present, the worth of music written by contemporary composers. And what is true of them is equally true of the term's support in formulating our opinions of works of the past which are still the subject of controversy.

In order to be great, a theme, an harmonic progression, a contrapuntal passage, a whole composition, must seem *inevitable*. An inevitable theme would be one that its composer could not have written differently. It came to him so naturally (whether im-

mediately or after any amount of polishing, as in Beethoven's case), that there was no longer room for question in his mind as to whether it should progress upward here, or downward there, or whether the laws of melody-writing allowed him to fashion it thus, or so. For, after all, the so-called "laws" of melody, and harmony, too, have been evolved from the patterns of immortal melodies and harmonic progressions, which were in themselves inevitable.

Consider for the moment the plots of some of our greatest novels, for in literature we find countless examples of inevitability. It would seem as though the author's secret of power lay in his ability to make the progression of his plot seem inevitable, and here, too, we must presuppose sincerity, for were the writer not himself convinced of the inevitability of his situations he could never convince his readers. Take, for example, the "happy ending," put there because the author and his publishers think the public demands it. In order that the hero and heroine may marry and live happily ever after, someone must be killed off, the inheritance uncovered, a rich relative turn up, or countless devices invented for the occasion. Such books may become "best sellers," but they rarely live for more than a season. In the truly great novel, or drama, the author does not need such artificial devices to finish his plot. He pushes his work to a logical conclusion, so that the ending is the inevitable result of events that have gone before, whether it be happy or otherwise. Then and only then do his intelligent readers feel that the work is true, and that its author has given them something logical, inevitable.

When the note left by *Tess Durbeyfield* beneath the door-sill of her betrothed failed to reach its destination, and when *Tess* discovered that *Clare* had not received it, and she had no further moral courage to stop the marriage, we feel that the tragedy of the succeeding pages is *inevitable*; there can be nothing else. We know that *Angel Clare* cannot forgive her, for Hardy has vividly described the man's type of mind. We feel that *Alec D'Urberville's* conversion is but temporary, and we know that it was inevitable that *Tess* should come back to him. Even when *Tess* murders the man who wronged her we know that it could have not been otherwise.

But to return to music. The *inevitable* melody must have so presented itself to the composer's mind that the writing of it became finally a mere mechanical process. True, the creator may have given it careful thought, he himself had to judge whether or not his product possessed the necessary qualifications; but the finished product must have completely satisfied the composer

(his self-criticism would here be the best judge), and later his hearers, if it was to possess that quality without which greatness is impossible. Brahms is said to have spent days pondering on the first phrase of a composition, and the writing of the rest of the piece was the simplest part of his labor. Brahms was genius enough to do this without the loss of spontaneity, and if the story be true, we may say that the final version of the first phrase became so inevitable that its subsequent development was also *inevitable*. The harmonic setting and the development of a piece, too, must have this attribute if the composition is to be great, because clearly an *inevitable theme*, no matter how great, cannot of itself make a satisfying piece of music.

How, then, are we to agree with our fellows in determining what is inevitable and what is not? That, indeed, is the problem. Perhaps an imaginary conversation between Messrs. Pro and Con regarding Tschaikowsky's Sixth Symphony may help to solve it. Mr. Pro has always gone into raptures whenever he has heard the work, while Mr. Con feels that it is but the personal wail of the composer. Mr. Pro thinks that it is beautiful, that it represents the woes of humanity at large. Mr. Con holds that the most of it is sordid, that its creator was in a sour mood when he wrote it, and that its significance is far from universal. Without doubt each is entitled to his opinion; it is not difficult to sympathize with either point of view.

Finally they come to the last movement, which to Mr. Con is the most depressing of the four. They turn to the page of the score which contains the following passage:

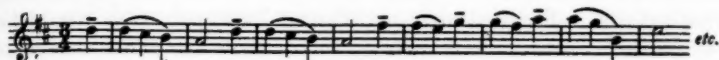
Fagotti

espressivo



Mr. Pro thinks it beautiful, noble in its grief, while Mr. Con considers it contemptible in its petty misery. Can either of them change a note without entirely destroying what the composer wished to say? Can Mr. Con suggest that the bassoonist alter the almost monotonous rhythm, and still interpret the composer's message? Can they agree that the little turn in the last measure but two, is not only essential in establishing the finality of the phrase, but that it is *inevitable* as well? Would either Mr. Pro or Mr. Con have said that it could have happened differently?

Then let them ask each other whether or not it was *inevitable* that the passage under discussion should have been followed by:



These two thinkers will never agree on the beauty or the significance of the work, but it may be possible that they will agree as to whether or not it could have been fashioned otherwise.

For example, let us take the theme of the second movement of Beethoven's Symphony in C major, the first of the nine.



After testing this theme, I am of the belief that the slightest change would destroy Beethoven's idea. If there be the possibility of a modification with equally convincing results, then the theme would lack inevitability and would not be flawless. There-with its claim for absolute greatness would diminish.

Again, consider the brief oboe solo in the middle of the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony:



Could there have been any other equally satisfying version of this short passage? Could it have been omitted without injury?

In the following treatment of the main theme from this same movement:



composers of the younger generation might have the courage to suggest a progression other than the diatonic succession of the quasi-sequences, but the point at issue is not one of possible substitutions. For instance, a different harmonization would be easy enough, but unless it gave to the passage the same character of inevitability, the substitution would be futile and would suffer, in point of art-value, by comparison.

I have just used the term "treatment." In that respect, too, obviously inevitability plays a most important part. The justification of what we term "atmosphere" lies in its power to establish this inevitability. As in literature, or in painting, the setting should render ensuing events foreshadowed. Turn again to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and consider the scene in which *Tess* makes her confession.

But the complexion even of external things seemed to suffer transmutation as her announcement progressed. The fire in the grate looked impish—demoniacally funny, as if it did not care in the least about her strait. The fender grinned idly, as if it, too, did not care. The light from the water-bottle was merely engaged in a chromatic problem. All material objects around announced their irresponsibility with terrible iteration.

The author has made his surroundings announce the impending tragedy; the atmosphere is but the means to an end. Likewise in music, if certain harmonic coloring will emphasize the message, if the use of certain modes will aid in establishing a mood or in creating a musical description, then only is such coloring justified, and it becomes not only pardonable, but essential.

Let us now take some new work, some work on which the verdict of time will not be able to fortify our opinion, and examine it with a view to judging it on its merits. Let us assume in the first place that the work is sincere, spontaneous, simple, and that its maker had acquired the necessary virtuosity of composition. This, it will be said, will eliminate from the discussion ninety-five per cent. of contemporary musical compositions. Very well, but there remain five per cent. which may possess those necessary elements of greatness. We select at random a score that appears to belong to this minority of quality, and examine it. As we go over the composer's presentation of the material we ask ourselves if another turn of the melody would have been equally effective, if a modulation could have substituted for a dissonant seventh-chord, or whether the addition of a ninth to a seventh would have created more "atmosphere." If we find that our substitutions are superfluous, that our changes fail to improve, or that they destroy the

composer's message, the work is *inevitable* and we may be reasonably certain that, at any rate, this premise for greatness is not absent.

On the other hand, if we should find that the composer might just as well have kept his tonality in major as shifted it to minor, or that his "atmosphere" might just as well have been Scandinavian as French, we have found "just another" piece of music, and no matter how talented or sincere its composer, no matter how simple his message, no amount of technical mastery on his part will save his work from oblivion. This test applies particularly to the vast army of imitators, including the so-called exponents of the modern French idiom, whose dearth of ideas is momentarily hidden in the thin disguise they call the coloring of their "school." If the ideas of these musicians could have been expressed in some other way with equal effect, or maybe lack of effect, their work lacks *inevitability* and we need have no fear that future generations will overturn our verdict. True, genius has been disregarded, prophets have been hooted down by their fellows, since the world began, but has the test of *inevitability* ever been conscientiously applied to their work?

There is however, one form of inevitability which is an entirely unwelcome and unbidden guest—*obviousness*. The distinction is too often overlooked, with the result that some composers are afraid to say the inevitable because they think it may seem obvious. They forget that there is a vast difference between the two, easily recognized by those who have learned to draw the line. If a theme be inevitable and yet so obvious that one knows beforehand what the next note, or the next harmony, is to be, it becomes commonplace and we soon tire of it. It is this perverted inevitability that makes dance-hall ditties popular to the masses. These tunes never tax the intelligence; they are something with which the people are already familiar, and consequently these people take them to themselves until they weary of their new baubles. Then comes the next "hit," merely a re-hashing of the old material, all of the coloring is the same as the last, and the street whistlers recognize it as their very own.

There is a further distinction between inevitability, as I am using the term, and obviousness. I have already stated that an inevitable melody cannot in itself make a great composition, and that if the treatment be commonplace the composition is worthless unless revised by a more competent hand. Occasionally, nay, far too often, we find a theme which possesses sincerity, and all the other "ingredients," but handled in such an *obvious* manner as to make the work unworthy of consideration.

The college boys sing a parody of the sentimental ballad which offers a splendid illustration of the *obvious*. The melody is simple, and it may be that the directness of its message bespeaks a sincerity that promises "immortality." Possibly a Dvořák might have used it with telling effect; yet consider the melody from the standpoint of the treatment given it for the present purpose:

Con sentimento



The "sob song" in all its glory! Any reader, not already familiar with the song, could have told just what would happen after hearing the first measure. Would he fail to guess that the minor subdominant would be used in the last half of the second measure? Would he doubt that the tonality would change to the dominant at the end of the second phrase, and would he not have prophesied the "post-mortem" descent of the inner voices at the end of that phrase? No glee club arranger would have failed to lower the seventh in the ninth measure, and a different modulation in the last four measures was not to be expected.

The inevitable need never be obvious. We must be careful lest we damn an obvious that which is really inevitable. Just because an event *had* to happen, does not necessarily imply that it was expected. On hearing a great melody for the first time, we realize that it could not have been different, but we did not necessarily recognize it as closely akin to something with which we were already familiar. Call it lack of originality, or what you will, obviousness is the quality that renders the so-called "popular music" banal, trite, and, moreover, this obviousness may be the inevitability of some other work from which the ditty was "borrowed."

Because the inevitable of yesterday may be the obvious of to-day, it is only fair to the composers of an older generation to remember that those musical devices which we consider shop-worn were original to them. Our ears have long since become attuned to Mozart and Beethoven, and some of us are apt to lose our interest in their work because of the lack of anything startling. Consider the thousands who have borrowed themes and other material, such as devices for expression, harmonic progressions, from these masters, and then blame the borrowers for the obvious use of their goods, but not Mozart, Beethoven or Wagner. It is because of the imitators that the inevitability, original with some composer of yesterday, seems to our blasé ears nothing but the obvious. Indeed, if the inevitability of a Chopin seem obvious to the listener, it may be because he hears an obvious interpretation, or because he may have heard the same melody but slightly altered in the street-tunes of his own generation;—witness, for instance, the reappearance of the *Fantaisie-Improptu* and the "Minute" Waltz a year or so ago. The effrontery with which "popular" composers help themselves to the ideas of the masters verily passes belief and has become a disgusting nuisance.

* * *

This theory of *inevitability* (versus the *obvious*) may be useful as a standard on which musicians, music-lovers and laymen can agree; a criterion for use in determining the "good" and "bad" in music. Not that we shall ever get away from individual opinion—that would be a pity; the *inevitability* of a composition would of course be subject to dispute at times, but it could not possibly be as much a field for controversy as "beauty," "significance," or other disputable terms in the current critical vocabulary.

THE SONGS OF CHARLES T. GRIFFES

By WILLIAM TREAT UPTON

IN the passing of Charles Tomlinson Griffes on April eighth, nineteen hundred twenty, American musical art lost one of its most valiant and valued protagonists. There is no question that had he lived out his life, he would have made a contribution to our native music of exceeding value; indeed, it does not seem entirely outside the bounds of reason to suppose that it might have been comparable in our own generation to what MacDowell gave to his. But be that as it may, he has left us much that is sure to live because of its intrinsic worth and beauty.

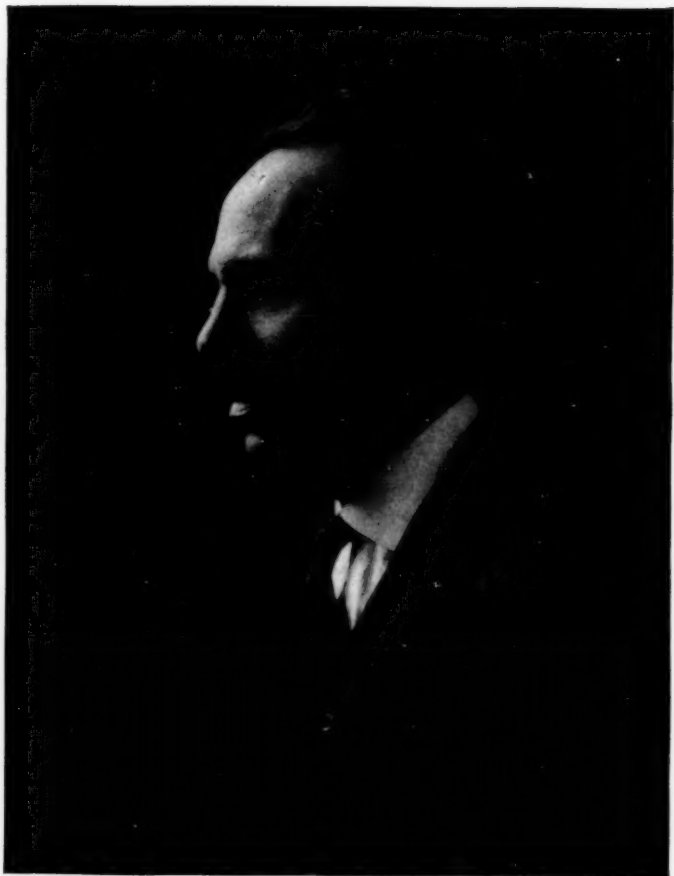
It is not at all my purpose to make an exhaustive study of Griffes' entire output, but rather in a fairly comprehensive manner to deal with one particular phase of his work—and that a very vital one—namely, his songs. When we come to make a serious study of his songs, we can but be amazed at their range and variety; and yet we cannot escape the conviction that in our study we are after all merely making explorations in the workshop of his mind; that his songs—the real songs he had it in his heart to sing—were left unsung; the finished product of his genius unfortunately was never to be attained.

We find him working in all styles and making use of all known media. He seems least influenced by Debussy and his school. Whatever may be true of his other forms of composition, we find no single song showing any marked trace of that influence. More clearly he reflects the tendencies of the modern German school, and naturally so, since like most Americans he spent the greater part of his student days in Germany; and when at times he breaks loose from this German influence, it is to the later French and Russian schools that he turns.

The complete list of his songs with dates of publication and also, where possible, of their composition, is as follows:

I. FIVE GERMAN POEMS FOR A SOLO VOICE WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT (1909). No opus-number

1. "Auf dem Teich, dem regungslosen" (Lenau)
2. "Auf geheimem Waldespfade" (Lenau)
3. "Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen" (Heine)
4. "Der träumende See" (Mosen)
5. "Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz" (Geibel).



Charles T. Griffes
1884-1920

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II. SONG FOR A LOW VOICE WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT. No opus-number (1910)

"Zwei Könige sassen auf Orkadal" (Geibel).

III. TONE-IMAGES FOR A MEZZO-SOPRANO VOICE WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT. Op. 3 (1912)

1. La Fuite de la Lune (Oscar Wilde)
2. Symphony in Yellow (Oscar Wilde)
3. We'll to the Woods and Gather May (W. E. Henley).

IV. TWO RONDELS FOR A SOPRANO VOICE WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT. Op. 4 (1913)

1. This Book of Hours (Walter Crane)
2. Come Love, across the Sunlit Land (Clinton Scollard).

V. THREE POEMS FOR VOICE AND PIANO. Op. 9 (1918)

1. In a Myrtle Shade (William Blake). March, 1916
2. Wai Kiki (Rupert Brooke). April, 1916
3. Phantom (Arturo Giovannitti). March, 1916.

VI. FIVE POEMS OF ANCIENT CHINA AND JAPAN FOR MEDIUM VOICE AND PIANO. Op. 10 (1917). Composed 1916-17.

VII. THREE POEMS BY FIONA MACLEOD IN MUSICAL SETTINGS FOR HIGH VOICE WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT. Op. 11 (1918)

1. The Lament of Ian the Proud (May, 1918)
2. Thy Dark Eyes to Mine (May, 1918)
3. The Rose of the Night (January, 1918).

VIII. TWO POEMS BY JOHN MASEFIELD, COMPOSED FOR MEDIUM VOICE WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT (1920). Published posthumously

1. An Old Song Re-Sung (July, 1918)
2. Sorrow of Mydath.

If one except from these songs "Sorrow of Mydath," "The Rose of the Night" and "Phantom" as over-involved and at least in so far as the last two are concerned expressing an abnormal mood, the "Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan" as experiments in an exotic idiom (although not at all without a certain attractiveness of their own) and "Wai Kiki," in some respects the most remarkable of all his songs, as the undetermined factor in our equation (for, as far as the writer personally is concerned, he does not yet know whether he likes it or not), there is left a residue of some fifteen songs, all individual, all intrinsically attractive and worthy, and for the most part characterized by a very intimate appeal—in itself an invaluable asset to any song.

Among the loveliest are the first five to German texts by Lenau, Heine, Mosen and Geibel. Here we find the keenest sort of response to the text, typical German nature poems. In none of his later and more elaborate songs do we find a more exquisite

and refined workmanship or a keener appreciation of the mood to be expressed. They are typical of the style of Brahms and Strauss, whose influence they plainly show. But the wonder lies in the perfection of their art. To be sure, Griffes in these earlier days had not the varied technique so characteristic of his later work; he repeats certain effects over and over again. He shares with Strauss the latter's fondness for a thrilling $\frac{3}{4}$ chord climax approached chromatically, for altered chords, enharmonic and chromatic harmonies of all kinds, and a strong, virile use of appoggiaturas and suspensions, all strictly in line with the best German traditions; in point of fact, these songs are as *echt deutsch* as Strauss himself, and, as beautiful and finished examples of this type of song, are worthy of careful and minute study.

The first one, "Auf dem Teich, dem regungslosen," opens with a typical Brahms subject, entirely worthy of that great master himself.

Ruhig und träumerisch
Tranquillo, quasi sognando *p*

Auf dem Teich, dem re - gungs-lo - sen,
O'er the tarn's un - ruf - fled mir - ror

pp sempre

weilt des Mon - des hol - der Glanz,
Lies the moon - light's sil - ver sheen,

Again on the following page we have a passage equally admirable, but this time as much in the style of Strauss as was the other in that of Brahms. Note the peculiarly Straussian obbligate melody in the piano score.

poco cresc.

manch - mal regt sich das Ge - flü - gel
Hark, a wa - ter - fowl is mov - ing

poco cresc.

träu - merisch im tie - fen Rohr.
Sleep - i - ly there in the reeds.

dim. *pp*

It is this remarkable assimilation of the technique of these masters of song-writing that makes these early songs so notable. Original perhaps they are not, at least in the sense of setting new patterns of beauty; but a rose garden is perhaps no less beautiful than a garden filled with unfamiliar, exotic bloom, provided always, of course, that the roses be perfect of their kind.

In the second song, "Auf geheimem Waldespfade," we begin to perceive the shadow of the future thrown across its very first measure, in the tonic chord colored by its sixth. Did Griffes look ahead and see the "Symphony in Yellow" and "In a Myrtle Shade" with their tonic harmonies enhanced not only by the sixth but by the second as well? So early had he been attracted by the beginnings of a new idiom.

The third song, "Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen," shows no continuation of this new manner of speech; in fact, we must wait for "La Fuite de la Lune" and the "Symphony in Yellow," three years later, for its resumption. Queerly enough, the third and last song of this later group, "We'll to the Woods and Gather May," shows no trace of this new influence. Whether the order of the published songs was not that of their composition (he had

not yet attained the distinction of seeing the date at the end of each composition, which marks the arrived and accepted composer—this was not to come till some years later), or whether he was deliberately experimenting back and forth, of course we cannot say. This song abounds in clever bits of technique with a delightful syncopated accompaniment in the manner of Brahms, and again the skilful chromaticism and bits of obbligato melodies à la Strauss.

The fourth song, "Der träumende See," shows in its middle section a lighter touch than has heretofore appeared—a thin wavy line of exquisite arpeggio work, as tenuous as the air we breathe; perhaps a hint of Gallic grace amidst the rich, sonorous Teuton score!

If the prevailing mood of the first four songs of this group seems serious, indeed oftentimes sombre (for the verses of Lenau, Geibel and those of their kind abound in tears and much weeping), the fifth and last, "Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz," is buoyant enough to more than make up for it, and is one of the few songs of real soul happiness that Griffes wrote. Even here, however, there is an undercurrent of seriousness; it is not so whole-heartedly happy as the later song, "We'll to the Woods and Gather May," which is joyousness itself, free and unrestrained. Not so here, for the happiness is too recent, it is in too close juxtaposition with sorrow—"O höchstes Leid, o höchste Lust, wie seid ihr euch so gleich!" All this is very subtly realized in the music.

Following upon these five songs without opus-number comes still another to a German text (this also without opus-number), "Zwei Könige sassen auf Orkadal," a ballad, sombre, dramatic in the dark, gloomy way that Griffes loved, nevertheless a true and simple interpretation of the text. As I have said before, up to this point Griffes' songs are of the German type—the workmanship excellent, the spirit refined and often exquisite, with the exquisiteness of "Wie Melodien" and "Traum durch die Dämmerung."

Beginning with the Three Tone-Images, Op. 3 (his first song opus), however, we find everything changed. With the dropping of the German text the German atmosphere has vanished. Not all at once—in "La Fuite de la Lune" there is still more of Strauss than of anyone else—but with the "Symphony in Yellow" the change is complete. Here is neither Brahms nor Strauss nor yet Griffes himself, as we have hitherto come to know him. We might at first think that now we detect the influence of Debussy,

but it has too bitter and acrid a taste—rather Ravel, perhaps; at any rate, a new spirit has moved in and taken possession. It is a strange, exotic kind of song, with an atmosphere all its own, and beauty, too—a kind of “frigid beauty,” to quote a recent phrase. Nor is it lacking in mellower moments as well. What could be more delightful than the unexpected harmonic change at the words “And like a yellow silken scarf,” and those delicious fifths at “The thick fog hangs along the quay.”

And like a yellow silken scarf, The

thick fog hangs along the quay.

Was even here amid these alien surroundings the spirit of Brahms inspiring those parallel thirds between voice and piano?

How strange that close upon the heels of this unexpected departure from all that has gone before, should come the one utterly joyous outburst of all Griffes' singing, the previously mentioned "We'll to the Woods and Gather May," carefree, utterly oblivious of all responsibility, even of all thought, and that too, written in the simplest, most unsophisticated style imaginable; a song of mocking humor and heedless of all restraint! We may well take note of it, for never again shall we find this mood in his songs.

With the Two Rondels of Opus 4, we reach again a new and a still different phase of development, or another experiment, as you will. For "This Book of Hours" Griffes finds in his music the exact counterpart of Walter Crane's verse; there is the same exquisiteness of detail, the same coldness, the same studied simplicity; never were text and music more truly at one. The mediæval touch is cleverly realized through the use of modal harmonization, through formal and delicate counterpoint, the whole having the tint of ivory and old gold.

In the second Rondel, "Come, Love, across the Sunlit Land," we find something of these same tints; there is, too, the same slight texture, but with an added sense of dainty and graceful movement, again absolutely befitting the text. This, too, is a type which never recurs in Griffes' songs, the nearest approach to it being the one immediately following these, a setting of William Blake's "In a Myrtle Shade"; but in this latter song there is a thicker texture, a more human touch. The same aloofness is to be found, the same sense of detachment, but not to the same degree; and influenced too, by the very human attributes of weakness and weariness, this subtle change of mood being very successfully reflected in the music. In its use of the most modern technique (abounding in ultra-modern harmonic devices) and yet in its fidelity to the archaic character of the text, it is thoroughly original and admirable; indeed it is one of the most individual of all his songs.

Second in this group (Op. 9) comes "Wai Kiki," the enigma already referred to. It is such, not at all in that it is the hardest of Griffes' songs to understand, but rather that it is the hardest one of all to appraise correctly. When we like a song, we like it; when we dislike a song, we at least know where we stand with regard to it; but when we are frankly unable to determine whether we like a song or not, then there is unrest of spirit and continual irritation of mind! And so it is with "Wai Kiki." One may well admire the clever suggestion of the native Hawaiian music and the skill with which the piano idiom is maintained throughout the piano part (here is no reduction of any orchestral score), and yet scarcely fail to be so conscious of its exceedingly unvocal melodic line, and of the uncouth character of much of its harmonization, that the song almost instinctively repels. Still, all this may well be a part of the composer's plan in expressing the psychology of the text. I am willing to admit the uncanny and sinister beauty of "the dark scents whisper and dim waves creep to me"; perhaps in time I shall come to concede the artistic value

of the stark and ugly "Gleam like a woman's hair, stretch out and rise." It is undeniable that in this song—perhaps as in no other—we see Griffes' power in painting with elemental colors. The fine sonority of the passage "And new stars burn into the ancient skies":

f poco appassionato

And new stars burn in - to the an-cient skies, -

and the intense passion of "Two that loved or did not love; and one whose perplexed heart did evil foolishly":

Of two that loved - or did not love, -

cresc. molto appassionato

and one Whose per -

ff

plex - ed heart did e - vil, fool - ish - ly, _____

are scarcely surpassed in all his writing.

"Phantom," the third and last of this group of poems, is no enigma at all; farfetched, difficult out of all proportion to its value, it seems—at least to me—a veritable tonal nightmare; and yet in its final page occurs one of Griffes' most charming phrases, "And hear thee sing again That old, sweet song":

and hear thee sing a - gain That old, sweet song, _____

pp

poco rit.

Op. 10, *Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan*, I am inclined to dismiss as a clever, more or less successful, experiment in the oriental idiom, perhaps more interesting to the experimenter than to anyone else, though this opinion is likely to be challenged by those who, realizing the fascination exerted over Griffes by oriental music and knowing his extraordinary interest in the influence of the idiom of the East upon present-day occidental music, feel that his contributions in this field are of unique and lasting value.

In Op. 11, however, we come to what is probably the fairest flowering of Griffes' art in song, "*The Lament of Ian the Proud*," and "*Thy Dark Eyes to Mine*." In this same opus is included "*The Rose of the Night*," but here again the mood is so entirely outside of any normal mental state that it can scarcely be expected to make a strong appeal. With "*Phantom*" and to a lesser degree "*Sorrow of Mydath*," it represents the darker and more perverse side of Griffes' art and can but be considered another of his experiments in depicting unusual emotional moods.

"*The Lament of Ian the Proud*" is sombre enough, it is true, but presents no unmitigated despair. Here the composer shows himself master of his art; there is no hesitancy or uncertainty in the drawing, no superfluous lines—all is well ordered and sane. The accompaniment is no true piano score, but suggests the orchestra with its first syllable; and there is no question that its effect is greatly enhanced when the orchestra is used; but even without this added attractiveness the song interests one by reason of the perfection of its workmanship, the appropriateness of its thematic material and the reserve with which the entire mood is presented. Here is no loud-mouthed ranting, but a sincere and infinitely pathetic presentment of an old man's unassuageable grief. In this simplicity and nobility of its expression it is perhaps Griffes' finest song.

"*Thy Dark Eyes to Mine*" is its fit companion, but contrasts with it in almost every particular. Where that is pathetic and a bit austere, this is velvetlike in the richness and smoothness of its texture. The whole first section is as sensuous as the heavy perfume of the lily, but so skilfully has the composer ordered his effects that there is nothing cloying or oppressive. Here he has poured out his gifts with a lavish hand, but always with the nicest regard for balance and perspective. Nothing is overloaded or obscure. Vital and constantly varying rhythms are here, a smooth melodic line, rich, colorful harmonies, abundance of attractive obbligato melodies in the piano score, as well as much

exquisitely modelled contrapuntal passagework for the piano; in short, a song of the greatest charm. The middle section is a bit vague and distinctly inferior to the rest of the song, but where shall we find the composer who never lapses?

There remain but two further songs to be considered, both published since the composer's death—"An Old Song Re-Sung" and "Sorrow of Mydath." The former is a vigorous sea-song, full of the tang of the sea air and with a powerful climax—as sinister as it is powerful. The "Sorrow of Mydath" is in Griffes' more extreme and less convincing style, though not without characteristic touches of power as well as beauty, the close being admirably handled.

We should choose then as most worthy among the songs we have been discussing "The Lament of Ian the Proud," "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," for their unusually successful delineation of moments of great emotional stress, for their broad sweep of passion, their heroic qualities *per se*; "In a Myrtle Shade," "The Book of Hours," for their exquisite detail, their charm of expression, finesse; "Come, Love, across the Sunlit Land," "We'll to the Woods and Gather May," "Wohl lag ich einst in Gram und Schmerz," for their finely differentiated moods of joyousness, each one entirely individual and all equally convincing; "La Fuite de la Lune" for its contemplative charm and attractive out-of-doors touches; and "Auf dem Teich, dem Regungslosen," "Auf geheimem Waldespfade," "Nacht liegt auf den fremden Wegen," "Der träumende See," for their grace of style, their clarity and sincerity both in content and expression.

What then is Griffes' individual contribution to the art of song-writing?

It seems to me to lie in his unfailing sincerity of style, nothing being done for extraneous effect, everything tending to interpret and elucidate the text; in the skill of his craftsmanship (used in the broadest sense of the word)—the beauty and richness of his harmonization, the singableness of his melodies, the vitality and virility of his rhythmic sense. More specifically we find in his technique one item of superlative charm—his skill (already referred to) in modelling appropriate and effective contrapuntal passagework for the piano. Here it seems to me he has few equals and no superiors. Strauss is past-master in this same art, but I know of nothing in his songs that can surpass in effectiveness and sheer beauty two passages of this sort in "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine"; for delicacy and purity of line, for rhythmic charm, for exquisiteness of finish, the closing measures "Afar, a falling star";

Aye, I would leap

far, A fall-ing star.

sempre Ped.

for passion, sonority, brilliancy and yet breadth, a dramatic gesture instinct with all that is heroic and noble, the earlier passage "Even of one such kiss all of the soul of me would leap afar."

e - ven of one such kiss,
ech - o e'en

cresc.

f

f All of the soul of me would leap a - far,

colla voce *f* *p* *molto espressivo*

These two passages alone would proclaim his distinction as a writer. We find many such passages, however, as for instance in the *più mosso* near the end of "The Lament of Ian the Proud," beginning "O blown, whirling leaf":

f *Più mosso* O blown, whir-ling leaf,

accel. e molto cresc. *mf* *f* *molto appassionato*

And the old grief, And

ff *allargando* wind cry-ing to me



This is a fine example of maximum of effect with minimum of effort, a situation so often and so deplorably reversed in modern writing. Also in "The Rose of the Night," "Wai Kiki," and even in the midst of the turmoil of "Phantom" (alas, here is no minimum of effort!), we find momentary glints of this splendor.

To forecast what Griffes might have accomplished in his song-writing had he lived, is manifestly impossible; it is difficult enough to pass final judgment on what he has left us—it is so evidently incomplete. Indeed, we have no means of knowing even what was his own idea in the matter, whether he actually grew so far away from his earlier style as some of his later songs would imply, or whether they, too, were but a passing phase, an experiment to be in turn followed by something different, or even by a possible reversion to some earlier type.

There are certain fixed or semi-fixed elements throughout his songs which may be of assistance in determining these matters in so far as they may be determined—for instance, Griffes seems to have had almost a classical reverence for form; not at all in terms of binary, ternary and the like, but of symmetry, balance and proportion. His first songs do not classify themselves readily except as free *durchkomponierte Lieder*, but one is never conscious of any lack of form in the sense of cohesion, of symmetry. This feeling of unity is obtained in many ways—through persistently appearing accompanimental figures, through recurring melodies and phrases, and most of all perhaps through an almost never failing repetition (modified it may be) at the very end of the song, of some melody or rhythm that has appeared earlier in some important or striking manner. Thus a perfect sense of unity is secured, and that in the midst of variety—a very happy and flexible formal scheme, allowing the composer the utmost freedom in interpreting his text and yet without any suggestion of formlessness. Hence it would seem entirely safe to assume that Griffes would never have outgrown his regard for essential form, and no matter how far he might have gone in other directions his work

would always have been characterized by symmetry and balance and not left to drift aimlessly along, as does so much of our latter-day, ultra modern music.

In no respect perhaps did Griffes show more marked individuality than in his sensitiveness to rhythmic subtleties. In the three songs of Op. 11, "The Lament of Ian the Proud," "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," and "The Rose of the Night," with perhaps the second of the posthumous songs, "Sorrow of Mydath," his command of rhythm reached its climax. In all of these we find the freest kind of rhythmical development. Here is no alternation of different time-signatures, as in his earlier songs (particularly Op. 9); all is unified through one main rhythmic impulse, but this impulse ebbs and flows with indescribable freedom and flexibility.

There seems no question then that, as far as form and rhythm are concerned, his further development could scarcely have been other than in the direction of an ever increasing wholesome rhythmic vitality, and this tendency would have been constantly guarded from danger of excess through his innate feeling for form and symmetry. What his further development would have been as regards melody and its harmonic background can only be the freest sort of surmise. For, as we have said, his work never seemed settled in these respects, he never seemed decided in his own mind as to what his final trend would be. But it seems only reasonable to suppose that the simplicity of feeling which he showed so attractively in his first five German songs, in the three Tone-Images, in the two Rondels, and not so simply but even more expressively and deeply in "The Lament of Ian the Proud" and "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," still further deepened and strengthened by his growing power of self-expression, would have eventuated in songs combining the utmost depth of feeling with real power and vitality of expression. That these songs are irrevocably lost to us will be a never ceasing source of regret not only to every lover of our own native art-song, but to all real lovers everywhere of that which is true and fine in this the most intimate of all the arts.

BELGIAN MUSIC AND FRENCH MUSIC

By CHARLES VAN DEN BORREN

THE geographical position of the Belgian territory, and the fact that French is there almost the exclusive language of the cultivated classes, might easily lead a superficial observer to believe that Belgium occupies, with reference to France and from the viewpoint of esthetic culture, a situation of dependence precluding all originality.

It is very true that a large majority of the Belgian journals are printed in French, that their information is most frequently drawn from French sources, and that they all, by natural inclination, consider France to be the chief friend of Belgium. Nothing is more comprehensible than this state of things when we take into account the close neighborly relations existing between the two countries, and particularly the historically intellectual rôle of France, of which no impartial mind would care to contest the superiority.

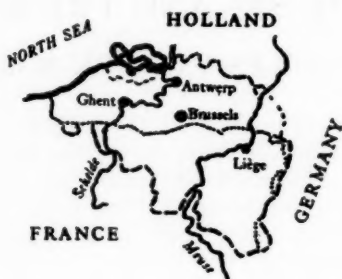
But, beneath appearances, there are hidden realities which, if one will only take the trouble to investigate them, plainly attest the existence of a national Belgian temperament very different from the French temperament, this being displayed in the divers manifestations of art by well-defined characteristics.

In reality, Belgium is a composite country formed by the juxtaposition and blending of two distinct ethnic groups, the Flemings and the Walloons. The Flemings speak a variety of local dialects of Germanic origin. Flemish newspapers and books are printed in Dutch, that is to say, in a language which, aside from a few nuances too slight to interfere with mutual comprehension, is entirely identical with the idiom spoken and written to the north of Belgium, in Holland.

The Walloon dialects¹ are directly related to French. The literary language of the Walloons is therefore French. There exists, to be sure, a dialectal Walloon literature, but it is restricted to small, unimportant local groups.

¹Here we employ the word Walloon in its popular acceptance. In a narrower, philological sense the Walloon dialect is that spoken in the eastern part of Belgium to the right of a vertical line passing approximately between Charleroi and Mons. To the left of this line the dialect of Picardy is spoken. In current speech, however, the term Walloon includes both the dialect properly so called, and that of Picardy.

Finally, an inconsiderable number of Belgians in the east of the provinces of Liège and Luxembourg,¹ speak a Low-German dialect.



.....Language boundary

Brussels, the capital of the kingdom, is situated in the Flemish portion of the country. It should be noted, nevertheless, that Flemish is spoken only by the less educated classes, and that among these latter there are a great many who, coming over from the Walloon side, have not mingled with the local population, and for this reason have introduced a large contingent of non-Flemish elements. As for the Brussels bourgeoisie, they use practically nothing but French in their conversation. The same may be said of a part of the bourgeoisie in other large cities on the Flemish side, like Ghent and Antwerp.²

This is not the place to enlarge upon the political difficulties which this duality in language has caused in Belgium. Suffice it to say, that as a result of the renaissance of Flemish letters in the course of the nineteenth century a movement was started having in view the conference on the Flemish language of privileges more extended than those accorded just after the Revolution of 1830. This movement has succeeded, at least in theory, and if its application frequently gives rise to differences, this is owing to conditions in which facts outweigh (theoretical) rights—facts which cannot be disregarded without bringing on violent

¹The province of Luxembourg should not be confounded with the Grand Duchy of the same name, a small independent state lying to the east of the Belgian province, and actually united with Belgium by a Customs Union.

²Observe that the word Flanders (Vlaenderen), which signifies "Flemish-land," is actually applicable only to the two Belgian provinces in the western part of the country (Westvlaenderen and Oostvlaenderen), so that the territory occupied by the Flemings is far more extensive than Flanders properly so called, since it comprises, besides, the province of Antwerp, Belgian Limbourg, and half of Brabant.

reactions harmful to the general interests of the country. Just now the most burning question is that touching the Flemish University, an institution which everybody agrees should be created, but on whose mode of organization no agreement can be reached.¹

Up to what point the mixture of races has been effected in Belgium is a problem whose solution offers considerable difficulties. Judging by certain appearances, it would seem that, at least among the bourgeoisie, marriages between Flemings and Walloons are not so frequent as one might suppose. On examining the list of persons who follow, in the large towns of Belgium, some special liberal profession, for example, the barristers, it will be found that, at Brussels, those bearing family-names of Flemish origin and those of French (or Walloon) extraction are represented in nearly equal proportions. At Antwerp and Ghent there is an enormous majority of Flemish names; at Liège, a majority quite as considerable of French names.

Thus it will be seen that, except in Brussels, where the matter is wholly natural by reason of the geographical situation of the city, the fusion between the two ethnic groups is far from complete. However, the century-long permanent vicinage of Flemings and Walloons, and the relations of every sort which it implies, together with their common politico-secular destinies,² upheld and established by the international recognition of Belgium as an independent State under the rule of a constitutional monarchy after the Revolution of 1830—all these circumstances have created between them not merely a community of interest, but also a community of ideas and sentiments and, up to a certain point, a common temperament.

This common temperament, the source of esthetic intuition and creation, is not easy of definition. It is, in truth, a decidedly composite affair, yet one which may be assumed, with some exactitude, as being the point of meeting between the Latin temperament and the Germanic temperament. But when one seeks to define, in a Belgian, just what marks the Latin rather than the German, and vice versa, great becomes the difficulty—for after all there has not been a simple juxtaposition, but a blending of these two natures. Hence, something new and truly original, which is the peculiar characteristic of the Belgian

¹At present there are in Belgium four French-speaking universities, two of which (at Ghent and Liège) are State Universities, and two are free Universities (Brussels and Louvain).

²See the "*Histoire de Belgique*," by H. Pirenne.

temperament. Generosity, opulence of coloration, forthrightness, a tendency to mysticism—such are the expressions that quite naturally come to mind when one ponders on the various manifestations of art in Belgium. The Van Eyck brothers, Roger Van der Weyden, Memlinc [Memling], Breughel, Rubens, Jordaens; Lassus, Grétry, César Franck, Peter Benoit, Guillaume Lekeu; Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Guido Gezelle,¹—all these artists, who are among the greatest that the soil of Belgium has produced, evoke in turn one or the other of the above aspects. Their predominant peculiarity is the "painter" temperament. They are "visualizers" who depict spirit landscapes with the same authority as scenes of nature. Great realists, they are likewise great visionaries, for whom reality is ever present as the basis of their visions. One might say that that is the true definition of art. But few artists appear to have taken this truth more literally than the Belgians. Whereas in French art a purely intellectual element often poses itself athwart instinctive feeling, and, in German art, reality is readily subordinated to considerations of a metaphysical order, in Belgium primitive instinct almost invariably triumphs over ratiocination or vague revery, and the contact with reality is, so to speak, never lost. From this spring the qualities—and also the defects—of Belgian art, which, when it is mediocre (and it is so more often than one would prefer), sins by a commonplace realism nearly akin to vulgarity. How many French musicians there are, among those of comparatively meagre endowment, whose taste and critical sense forearm them against all triviality, and who, when they are wise enough not to overpass the limits of their capacity, compose works perfectly qualified to charm us! In Belgium this type of music of an intellectual development is, one might say, non-existent. It is all or nothing. From the sublime they fall unwittingly and, as it were, without transition, into the low and grotesque. Even very great artists, like César Franck himself, or Guido Gezelle, do not escape these inequalities. In Germany, an instinctive and somewhat sheepish obedience to the discipline of the great classics, saves mediocre talents from bad falls, and maintains them, by the same token, on a level which to a certain extent disguises their mediocrity.

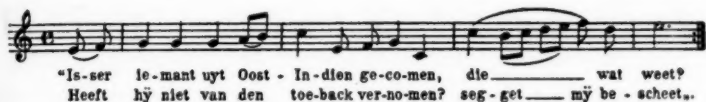
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It is no easy task to seek out, in folklore, the root of Belgian musical art. The popular Flemish and Walloon songs are in

¹The foremost Flemish poet of the nineteenth century.

many cases of a very fine esthetic quality, especially the most ancient ones.¹ As literature, they are a faithful echo of the naïve popular soul with all its forcefulness, good sense, humor, and natural sensibility. As music, they display no genuine originality excepting on the Flemish side. Most of the Walloon songs are, in reality, importations from France; and if some of them, like the *crémignons*, or dance-songs of Liège, possess a true local flavor, it is not properly to their music that they owe it, but to the charming ease with which their words, sparkling with wit, gayety and roguishness, have been adapted to foreign "timbres."

Flemish song, whose repertory, moreover, is infinitely broader, has stronger claims on our attention than the songs of the Walloons because it discovers musical characteristics that are much more clearly defined and free from foreign influences. In this matter, however, it is well to proceed cautiously. One is occasionally much surprised by discovering that some theme which, in outward semblance, is a native product of Flemish soil, really had an origin quite other than the one at first imagined. A typical case is that of the famous "Tabakslid" (Tobacco Song), whose beginning follows:



Translation: Has anybody come from the East Indies who knows something? Has he not heard of tobacco? Tell me about it.

This was one of the most popular melodies in Belgium, Holland, France and England, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth (1863), F. A. Gevaert employed it as the principal theme of his cantata in honor of Jacob Van Artevelde, the hero of Ghent in the middle ages. Later, he again utilized it in the second Belgian national hymn, *Vers l'Avenir*, dedicated more especially to the colonial spirit of Belgium. Now, generally speaking, nobody guesses that the air, whose clean-cut rhythm and bold movement are like a veritable symbolization of the independent spirit of Flanders, is of purely French origin, and is met with for the first time in a Parisian collection of 1613

¹The readiest way of forming an opinion about them is to consult M. E. Closson's excellent anthology, "Chansons populaires des Provinces Belges" (Brussels, Schott), a work provided with a preface notable for its scientific value.

under the title of "Ballet pour Madame," set to the words "Esce Mars, le grand Dieu des alarmes" (Is it Mars, the great god of alarms).

An analogous case is presented by a martial song of the same epoch, "Merck toch hoe sterck," probably one of the finest popular airs known to the world, in its fierce energy of expression and the ideal manner in which the music fits the text. This song tells of the siege of Berg op Zoom (1622).

Merck toch hoe sterck nu int werck sich al steld, die t'al-len ty soc ons
Siet hoe hy slaeft, graeft en draeft met ge-weld, om on-se goet, en ons

vry-heyte heeft be-stre-den; Hoor de Spaensche trom-mels slaen!
bloet, en on-se ste-den!

Hoor Maraens trom-pet-ten! Siet hoe komt hy trec-ken aen,
Ber-gen te be-set-ten. Berg op Zoom, hout u vroom, stut de Spaensche

scha-ren; laet's Lands boom end' syn stroom trouw-lyck toch be-wa-ren.

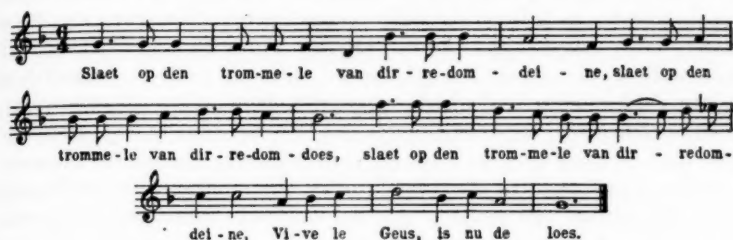
Metrical Translation: See how with might they would fright us in fight! Like lions grim hither stream their blood-thirsty powers. To our despite e'er in sight, day and night, over our hearths and our hearts dark the war-cloud still lowers. Hark, the Spanish drums, how they sound! How the trumpet's war-cries loud and long resound! See, the wary foe moves apace; Bergen they are threat'ning as they onward press. Berg op Zoom, guard our home, save us from the tyrant's power! Stanch and strong stem the throng, Berg op Zoom, with wall and tower!

How great was our surprise on the day when we learned that this admirable music was a simple adaptation of the English air "What if a daye, or a moneth, or a yeare," the words of which have a purely moral and philosophical significance!

Some slight changes sufficed to give this melody—*ben ritmato*, to be sure, but of a rather calm and tranquil style—the most bellicose accent imaginable. It is just here, indeed, that the genius for adaptation is shown. But, given these conditions, can one reasonably speak of a national popular song, a product of the soil, the fruit of the very temperament of the race?

A genius for adaptation! That is the term which fits, in most cases, these products of the popular imagination. And this same

folk-wit is manifested in the splendid "Chanson des Gueux" (second version), which dates from the second half of the sixteenth century and was directed against the Spanish Inquisition:



Translation: Beat on the drums of dirredomdeine (onomatopœic), beat on the drums of dirredomdoes; Long live the Gueux! that's the slogan.

Now, as in the foregoing case, we have not to do with an original melody, but with one simply borrowed from a religious cantilena dating so far back that one might feel sure that its source was Flemish¹ until the contrary was proved, and whose contemplative character vividly contrasts with the vengeful roughness of the adapted version:

Melody: Bedruckte hertekens (Oppressed hearts).



From the above examples it will be seen what a complex affair the genesis of folk-songs is, and what a mistake it would be to consider them, without previous examination, as wholly original creations of the folk-soul.

None the less is it true that such a song, even when it is musically nothing but an adaptation of some preëxistent melody, forms, from every point of view, an assemblage of elements which express with full sincerity the very quintessence of popular thought and emotion.

¹For a detailed study of Flemish folk-song and its musical and literary sources, cf. the great work of Fl. Van Duyse, "Het oude nederlandse lied" (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1904-1908).—In the particular case of the song "Slaet op den trommele" Van Duyse (for technical reasons into the details of which we cannot enter here) himself assumed the rôle of an adapter, but did so in a manner which one can, without hesitation, pronounce conformable to historical reality.

Viewed in this light, the study of folk-songs is strongly recommended to all musicians who desire to insure themselves against the dryness of a style either too premeditated or too artificial. Art is peculiarly inclined to this style at times when music tends to follow slavishly some international mode of a purely conventional character. Of this Peter Benoit (1834-1900) was well aware when he attempted around 1870 to establish a national Flemish school which opposed, before all else, "eclecticism, cosmopolitanism, and utilitarianism."¹ At that time Belgium was deeper than ever in the toils of mediocrity spread by the conventional opera of the nineteenth century and the sham brilliancy of instrumental virtuosity. Art led a merely factitious existence, of which clairvoyant intellects plainly perceived the illusive aspect, and which could not persist without finding an end, sooner or later, in complete sterility.

A fertile controversialist, somewhat superficial, occasionally too much wedded to system, but intelligent, cultivated, and guided by sure instinct, Peter Benoit possessed a marvellous comprehension of what may be done with folk-art as a basis:

In so far as they are the spontaneous and in no way artificial impression of the heart and soul, folk-songs [so he says] are the pioneers of national music; in them nature reveals herself in all her vital force, in all her originality, in fullness of characterization; in the songs of a people are reflected their aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their struggles and triumphs, their misfortunes; in them are written, as in letters of fire, the very history of humankind.

Then, viewing the matter from a more specifically Flemish standpoint, he insists on the absolute necessity of establishing a close bond of union between one's mother-tongue and the music which one is moved to compose:

A people who do not speak their own language will never create original melodic types; there is, in fact, a mysterious correspondence between the songs, on the one side, and the form and syntax of the language, on the other.

This implies nothing more nor less, he thinks, than a justification of the Flemish school of music (*Vlaamsche Muziekschool*) which he had founded at Antwerp in 1867, and which has become since then the Royal Flemish Conservatory (*Koninklijk Vlaamsch Conservatorium*).

¹*Cf.* his "Verhandeling over de nationale Toonkunde" (Dissertation on National Music), a series of articles published in the "*Vlaamsche Kunstbode*" and collected in one volume (Antwerp, 1875).

Did Peter Benoît succeed in his enterprise?—Yes, if one contents oneself with verifying the general elevation of the esthetic level in Flemish Belgium—an elevation moreover, in which the entire country participated.—No, if one considers the comparative sterility of the Flemish School since the decease of its founder. To be sure, production is abundant and often of good quality. But, with the exception of its chief, not one of the representatives of this School has realized works such as one might reasonably expect as expressions of the quintessence of Flemish genius.

As for Benoît himself, though he be incontestably of the lineage of Rubens, one cannot dream for a moment of comparing him with that giant of painting, as regards the full amplitude of genius. In him there is naught of that ingrained aristocracy, that heroic ardor, that boldness of imagination, that never cease to surprise and enthrall us in the author of "The Descent from the Cross" and the "Battle of Amazons."

One of the capital works of Peter Benoît is actually dedicated to the celebration of Rubens' memory on the occasion of the tercentenary of his birth (1877). This is the famed Rubens Cantata, entitled "*Vlaanderens Kunstroem*" (Glory of Flemish Art). Intended for open-air performance by a host of chorists and instrumentalists in the historical frame of the city of Antwerp, it has in truth a grandiose decorative aspect, and from this side perfectly answers its purpose. Unfortunately, the text (by Julius de Geyter) is of rather mediocre quality, as is frequently seen in the case of "occasional" compositions. The towns of Flanders and Holland meet to celebrate the glory of their great sister. With them are united in a brilliant cortège the different regions of the earth, and variously grouped choruses proclaim in appropriate language the reverses and the triumphs of the Flemish lands. All this is somewhat naïve in the style of its presentation, and smacks of a romanticism provincial in its simplicity. In proof of these statements we append the words attributed to America as she enters upon the scene:

For the youngest of nations, art has no value; all she craves is gold and power: thus thinks the world entire. And what she dares fills with astonishment the gazing world.

The youngest of nations has a soul of iron. None the less do you see her kneel before you and implore you that she may obtain the products of your art in exchange for her gold!

The original Flemish text runs:

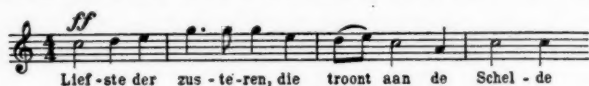
Voor 't jongste volk heeft kunst geen waarde;
't Wil macht en goud, zoo denkt heel de aarde;

En wat het waagt, verstomt de waereld, die 't aanschouwt.
 Het jongste volk heeft ijzren zielen.
 Toch ziet gij het knielen,
 Smeeken om uw kunst in ruiling voor zijn goud!

The following fragment shows with what energetic simplicity Peter Benoît expressed the beginning of this chorus:



We again meet with this same broad, straightforward, clean-cut melodic line in the theme with which the work commences:



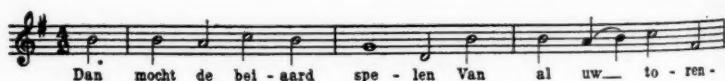
Translation: Dearest of sisters, that thronest on the Schelde.

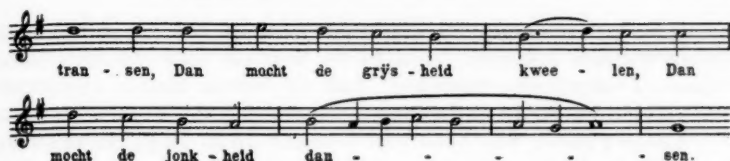
But now look at the march that accompanies the pompous procession of all the nations:



Despite a certain kinship with the March of the Nobles in *Tannhäuser*, it is impossible not to be struck by the opulent coloring and the sumptuousness of the harmonies.

But where Benoît attains to the height of originality is in the "Chant du Carillon," sung at first in unison by a chorus of youths:





and afterwards repeated in the same manner, but this time accompanied by the vocal quartet in detached notes in imitation, as it were, of the rejoiceful throbbing of the carillon:

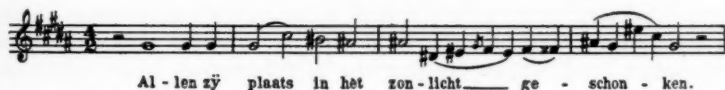


Translation: Then should the carillon resound from all your towers; then should the old folk chatter, then should the young folk dance.

The entire chorus is, besides, accompanied by the orchestra.

This is genuine Flemish music, sufficiently external in effect, we admit, but astonishingly fresh in color and supremely natural in expression. Hence, it is no matter for surprise that it has been gathered into the current repertory of popular Flemish song, of which it forms the finest modern specimen.

But in the Rubens Cantata not all is of this quality. And if Peter Benoît savors Weber and Wagner above all, there is no room for doubt that in the principal theme of the final chorus:



Translation: For all let room be made in the sunshine!

the generous Weberesque sweep of the melodic phrase is, to a certain extent, spoiled by a trivial accent à la Meyerbeer.

However this may be, the Rubens Cantata is nevertheless, taken as a whole, a highly typical work and one almost of the first rank as regards the expression of popular patriotic feeling; and, better than any other in Belgium, it exhibits the essential difference between the music of this country and that of France.

When we come to artists like César Franck (1822-1890) and Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1894), who received, all in all, the most effective part of their musical education in France, the question becomes somewhat more involved. But in any event there

is one fact that cannot be disputed, namely, that in spite of the strong French influence brought to bear on them by this same course of education, they held fast to certain native characteristics which markedly differentiate them from the French masters.

César Franck was born and brought up in Liège, in the very heart of the Walloon country. His father, however, belonged to a bourgeois family which had lived from father to son at Gemmenich in the northeast corner of the Province of Liège, at the point of intersection between Belgium, Holland and Germany—a region where a dialect is spoken which by some is qualified as German, by others as Dutch, but which is, in all probability, a *mélange* of the two.¹ Nicolas-Joseph Franck (such was his name) married in 1820 a young girl of Aix-la-Chapelle. The youthful couple settled in Liège, where César was born December 10, 1822.² They spoke German and, according to indirect though reliable testimony, which we have been able to gather, it is averred that the master, until the end of his life, never failed to say his prayers in German—and what more natural, seeing that it was his mother Barbe Frings, a German, who taught them to him?

In these circumstances it is difficult to claim that the great Belgian musician, French by naturalization, was a pure Walloon. But that is of no consequence. What interests us to know is, that he was descended from a family belonging to a part of Belgium where the Germanic and Latin influences met, combined and blended in such a fashion as to form a thoroughly original whole. In Lekeu's case the matter is much the same, although his family, so far as appears, was purely Walloon. His native place, Heusy, near Verviers, is in fact situated some twenty kilometers to the southwest of Gemmenich, in a Belgian district where Walloon is spoken, but where, among the family-names, one still meets with a surprising proportion of German appellatives.

César Franck left a strong impression upon the young French school, more particularly during the period between 1885 and 1900. But if one cares to take the trouble to investigate the product of this influence, one will speedily remark that it is limited to the adoption, on the one side, of the master's harmonic innovations, and, on the other, of his principles of formal construction. Now, these are purely extrinsic elements which have

¹Touching this point, cf. the article by L. Lambrechts, "Had César Franck Vlaamsche bloed in de aderen?" (Did César Franck Have Flemish Blood in His Veins?), publ. in the journal "De Standaard" of October 30, 1921, Brussels.

²All these details have been established with remarkable exactitude in two articles in the *Œuvre* (monthly bulletin of the *Œuvre des Artistes* publ. in Liège) for June and July, 1914, by Dr. V. Dwelshauvers.

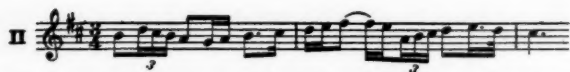
practically nothing to do with what constitutes the most characteristic expression of a creative artist's individuality—we mean his melodic invention and his application to it of an harmonic and polyphonic structure which gives it its entire value.

The melodic invention of César Franck, and of Lekeu—this it is which instantly differentiates them from a d'Indy, a Chausson, a Duparc, or a Fauré. The difference is not easy to define—these are things that one feels rather than distinguishes by the intelligence or by analysis.

Franck is the Christian mystic; Lekeu, the pagan. In both there is an overflowing flood of lyricism, more tender with the old master, more passionate with the neophyte. Nothing, or next to nothing, of that restraint, that excessive pudicity of emotion, that so frequently checks the French in mid-career and constrains them to standardize their inspiration, to contain it within the bounds of a classic frame. Franck and Lekeu let themselves go, and, as they have only beautiful things to say, they do not stop until their artistic instinct warns them that it is time. The French musicians have a curb made ready beforehand. Those of Belgium borrow one along the way, according to necessity. Thus they display greater warmth, keener penetration, subtler ingenuity, while the French possess more elegance, a larger variety of half-tints, more intellectual subtlety.

Men like César Franck or Lekeu cling closer to the soil than a Fauré or a Chausson. They are rougher, less civilized, have less of the "cit." With them the feeling for nature is more direct, less "literary," more visual and, in general terms, more "sensuous" in the most elevated acceptation of the word. Here, again, we encounter the Belgian temperament in yet higher potency, sensitive above all to the magic of color, to the caress of the breeze, to the broad expanse of the clouds, to the salty tang of the ocean winds, to the paradisaical bloom of summertime, to the vast yearning of wide northern horizons. Take up *Les Éolides*, or *Psyché*, or the pastoral entr'acte of *Hulda*, by César Franck. Note the melancholy and impassioned reverie of Lekeu, overspreading all his compositions, and the "pantheistic" themes in the Adagio of his sonata for violin and piano:





In France you will never meet with such as these. And with these quotations, of a character at once so racial and so individual, I bring this study to a close, assured that my readers will no longer doubt, after the proofs which I have sought to set before them, that there is indeed a Belgian music very different from the French.

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

MUSIC AND ITS AUDITORS

By CONSTANTIN VON STERNBERG

THE purpose and utility of art criticism were some time ago explained by the great critic Ernest Newman (London) in an interesting essay where he specifies its various functions converging upon the central point of informing the public and guiding their taste and judgment by analyzing or otherwise elucidating the works of art that are offered said public for inspection and audition. A number of other well-known critics have treated the same theme in a similar vein, but they—one and all—have dealt either with the works of art or with the interpreting artists and sometimes with both. They have never touched upon the public. To the public they have always spoken, but never *about* the public.

Is, then, the public exempt from criticism, favorable or adverse as it might have to be? Is it not a generally accepted fact that some audiences inspire an artist, while some others chill him? Do not some audiences applaud or refuse to applaud without discrimination? Are not some (or many) audiences captivated by the quality of a voice rather than by its artistic employment? Do not many audiences grow enthusiastic over a pianist's technique, though it betray a total absence of spirituality? And in the face of such well-known facts should the man on the stage or platform have no right to say how his audience impressed him and to speak his mind as frankly and as publicly as the auditors do it through their critics and through their "letters to the editor"? Is the relation between the artist and his audience the one thing in the world that has only one side? One can scarcely believe it; and since the critics have, so far, failed to discuss audiences, an attempt to do so may here be made by one who has faced the audiences of many, aye, of most countries where music is cultivated and whose entering the concert-halls was for a long term of years through the stage door which leads to "the other side of the house."

It would be manifestly unjust to single out the audiences of one large city when the "musical publics" in all large cities are almost entirely alike with but two exceptions (which, out of forbearance with political bigotry, shall not be named). To

find this statement corroborated one needs only to read the letters of great musicians to their friends where, in spite of all marks of outward success, they speak in the same uncomplimentary terms of Paris as they do of London, Rome, etc. True, these letters, excellent literary documents (like those of Berlioz and others), were written a good while ago; but personal observation and close contact with most of the great artists of the present enable the writer to say that the discrepancy between art and its appreciation by its "patrons" has not noticeably lessened since those letters were written.

The spectators in a picture gallery are usually ambulant and therefore too unstable a body to afford a good view to the critic, while at the opera it is the variety of elements offered to the audience which makes it impossible to the critic to ascertain whether it is the music, the drama, the scenic mounting, the costuming, the singing or the acting that interests this or that part of the audience. All these obstacles to the critic's judgment are totally absent in the Symphony concerts, where there is music and music only, and where the majority of auditors are *abonnés* (subscribers for the entire season). There the personnel of the audience is in the main always the same. This imparts to the audience an aspect of definiteness and stability sufficient for the critic to focus his camera successfully upon them. Different persons in the audience are, of course, differently affected by this or that part of the program, but it might nevertheless be taken for granted that the general impressions of the esthetic quality and dignity of the divine art are fairly uniform—that is, they ought to be; but are they?

It is scarcely necessary to mention that the audiences everywhere contain a certain percentage of true appreciators and connoisseurs of music; but this percentage is too small to make itself felt on "either side of the house."

Be it, then, said at the outset that to the majority of auditors those concerts are no more than a purely *sensuous enjoyment*. Of the esthetic substance of the various compositions this majority perceive, practically, nothing. What prevents their perceiving this quality is not a want of musical knowledge, but something very different, to which we shall presently come. True, they "manifest" a certain degree and kind of appreciation by applauding; but since they applaud Beethoven's "Fifth" neither more nor less than any specimen of the hyper-modernistic "effect"-twaddle, the question naturally urges itself: "*What is it that they applaud?*" To which their want of discrimination furnishes the

discouraging reply, that it is the purely material quality of music: the interplay or the massing of orchestral colors, perhaps also the ebb and flow of dynamics and—possibly—the, often questionable and mostly superfluous, gesturings of a popular conductor; *never the compositions!* And as it is not the composition, the applause can concern neither its interpretation nor the technical execution of it, but solely that “purely sensuous diversion” for which the composition merely supplied the material or occasion.

It is sometimes suspected that the artists inwardly sneer at any auditor that does not possess a technical or theoretical knowledge of music; but such a suspicion should be calumniously unjust, because the artists have a very precise realization of the fact that the primary appeal of music is made to the ear. They know also that a theoretical—and even practical—knowledge of music, *if not very thorough*, presents all the dangers that beset “a little learning” in any line. Moreover, they know from sad experience that the judgment of some “learned” professional musicians is often badly warped by the influence of the particular “school” of composition in which they have grown up, or by kindred influences. If the artists could choose their auditors they would invariably give the preference to those that are unbiased, irrespective of their learning.

Hence, it is by no means ignorance for which the artist pities the average concert-goer, but, primarily, for a wrong and in a measure undignified mental attitude toward music—for not realizing that the listening to, say, a Beethoven Symphony or Concerto demands a mind fully as active as does the reading of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare or Goethe, although the mental activity may be of a different order and lean more toward the psychical than the reasoning capacity. It is solely this wrong attitude, this acceptance of music as a “sensuous diversion” instead of an “esthetic gratification,” for which the artist—far from sneering—pities the average concert-goer, because he feels that the auditor paid for something which was ready for him to take and which, nevertheless, he did not obtain.

Whenever an artist mentions that there is a purely esthetic side to music, he is usually asked what this means, and then he has to explain that “esthetic” derives from the Greek word *aisthesis*, which means “feeling,” and that—since it is chiefly the soul-processes of our feelings which music expresses—the proper appreciation of music affords us an *esthetic* (and not a purely *sensuous*) enjoyment. Music, however, does not merely express feelings, it also communicates them to the auditor: it rouses

corresponding feelings in him if—and here lies the crux of the matter—the auditor actively *wills* to receive the communication: if he is minded to be the addressee. If an addressee receive, say, a written message of which the chirography or the monogram were all that interested him; if he cared not to know the content of the message; who would take the trouble of writing to him? Yet he appreciates a certain part of the message; he likes or dislikes the material, instead of the essential, part of the message and it is just this purely material and not the essential part of music which the average concert-goer “appreciates.”

In the matter of appreciation the distinction between “pleasure” and “amusement” is so important as to call for a brief discussion; the more so as in the colloquially loose use of terms these two are only too often regarded as interchangeable synonyms. Herbert Spencer defines pleasure as “the free exercise of our best faculties.” He does not specify mental, emotional or physical, which sets us free to infer that one who finds his greatest pleasure in athletics, golf, and the like, admits that his best faculties lie in his physical constitution and adroitness, whereas one whose greatest delight is a good book, regards his mental faculties as his best. “Amusement,” on the other hand, derives from the Greek “Mousa” (Latin “Musa”) and the negative prefix “a.” We are “musing” when we think; when we do not think we are “a-musing” ourselves or letting some one else “a-muse” us. Hence, “amusement” conduces to not-thinking, not-feeling, not-anything, to nothing that requires the exercise of our best faculties. (“Faculty,” by the way, deriving from “facul,” means the power to do something with “facility”; at any rate, to *do* something.) The chief distinction between the two concepts is, therefore, that in “pleasure” we are either mentally, emotionally or, at least, physically active, while in “amusement” we are passive. (Be it admitted here that there are transitional stages between pleasure and amusement, but they lean mostly to the side of passivity.)

Since, however, neither pleasure nor amusement precludes the idea of “enjoyment,” and as this in its turn implies appreciation, it may not be inadmissible to distinguish between active and passive appreciation. E. g., one may appreciate the dignity of the Buddhistic faith without feeling any inclination to embrace it, while another’s appreciation may urge him to turn Buddhist. One person looking at a mountain may well appreciate the fact that the mountain is high, possibly even that it is higher than some other particular mountain, while another person beholding the same mountain experiences the “feeling” of its height, rises

mentally to its summit, imagines himself breathing the tenuated atmosphere, depicts to his inner vision the sublime outlook from there, and feels humbled by the divine power and wonder of nature. Need it be said which one of the two appreciates actively and which passively? Looking at a wide horizon, as from on shipboard, one person mentally measures and appreciates the distance only, while another person lets his soul sweep over it, look even beyond, as if it had wings to carry him there, and feels a host of thoughts—scientific, religious, or both—flash through his subconscious mind. A fine painting shows to one spectator the subject only, and it may also cause a sensuous enjoyment through its colors; while another spectator perceives with the antennæ of his soul the mood, the temper in which the artist caught the subject, and thus enters into the spirit of the picture—into a kinship, a sympathetic rapport, with the artist and his work.

The same dichotomy of appreciation obtains in music as well, though music demands of the auditor a still stronger esthetic activity than do the works of other arts. In the first place, his attention must be much closer, because a piece of music does not—like a picture, statue or building—appear at once as a totality, but as a pageant or procession, successive, continuous, consecutive. Of a picture or statue the eye can take in the totality first, then go from one detail to another, return for comparison to the first one, look again at the totality, and thus roam and wander over the work at will and pleasure. Even in a book, when doubtful about the exact meaning of a sentence, one may go back to its beginning or read over the whole paragraph or page.

But not so with music! What is past there—is past for good! If some little motive, or a theme, recurs in the course of the piece we cannot possibly recognize it as a recurrence if we did not notice it when it first appeared. And yet, in recognizing a recurrence as such, lies the secret of musical form-perception: for form—"feeling," though of this feeling—as with most matters of pure feeling—we may be but subconsciously aware or entirely unconscious. The performer of music can convey to his auditor melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tone-color and what not, but he cannot convey form. By making the recurrences of passages (motives, themes) tally precisely with their previous presentations he can supply the means for form-perception; but the synthesis belongs to the auditor's mental activity, by which he recognizes the recurrences, the very element that makes for unity in a composition. This attention, necessary as it is, would still be directed to no more than the merely constructive side of the piece, to its architectural

integer only, and yet—how many auditors are attentive enough for even this? Their applause may nevertheless be perfectly sincere, but in the overwhelming majority of cases it is addressed exclusively to the interplay of colors on the orchestral palette, to the chirography of the message, while the design of the piece—yes, the mere design of the musical picture—remains entirely unperceived, unfelt. Why! Because whatever appreciation there was, was passive; purely physical perception, devoid of what was before referred to as a sympathetic *rapport*.

In some measure the wrongness of the auditor's attitude may be extenuated by the tendency of the times to furnish mechanical reproductions of art (talking machines, movies, pianolas, graphophones, etc.) which tend more and more to lull the mental alertness and activity of the audiences to sleep. These mechanical reproductions impress the eye or ear of the spectator or auditor while he sits in his chair as passive, as inert, as in a barber's chair—where the very turning of his head is done for him by the barber. In the concert as in the movies and at the barber's there is something being done for him, done by others, and—he is satisfied to "let George do it."

There are a few other matters that can be cited in support of the present criticism. There is, for instance, the fact that many people, totally ignorant that there is such a thing as a "musical thought" (just as there is pictorial, architectural, poetic thought), insist upon having a "story" attached to a music piece, and that in listening to the piece they prefer to occupy themselves with adjusting the music to the story instead of taking in the music as music, for its own sake, for its own beauty. It may also be said that this foolish attitude is favored rather than counteracted by the newfangled program-musicians of the hyper-modernistic type of *faiseurs d'esprit*; and there are still other pretexts for the spiritual inertia of the average concert-goer, but even the best of these pleas could only mitigate his fault a little without undoing the fact that he is satisfied with tasting the frosting of the cake, instead of the cake itself: with the outward appearance of things artistic, instead of their inwardness. The average concert-goer is like one who buys a parcel of goods and takes only the wrapping-paper home.

To be moved to joy or sadness in response to a fine piece of art implies that the psychic content of it was caught; and this is "something done" by the auditor. The glorious feeling of achievement, of having communed on terms of soul equality with a superior mind, of having been, far away from one's little self, in a

realm of pure feeling and sublime thought; that feeling, so well known to book-lovers—how many or what percentage of concert-goers have ever experienced it? Whether we think of Paris, London or Rome, as was said before, the question would receive the same discouraging answer.

"But what about America?" the reader might ask. In reply it should be said, first, that the question is not quite fair, because our average concert-goer—even though he were not superior to his like in the old world—could still defend himself by pointing to the fact that he has no more than decenniums back of him, as against the centuries of his European brother. Secondly, he can safely rely upon it that any impartial observer must concede a far greater "willingness to learn" to him than to his brothers across the pond. In musical matters the second reply is as unassailably true as the first; and this, by itself, is enough to open a vista of the greatest hopes in the future.

MUZIO CLEMENTI

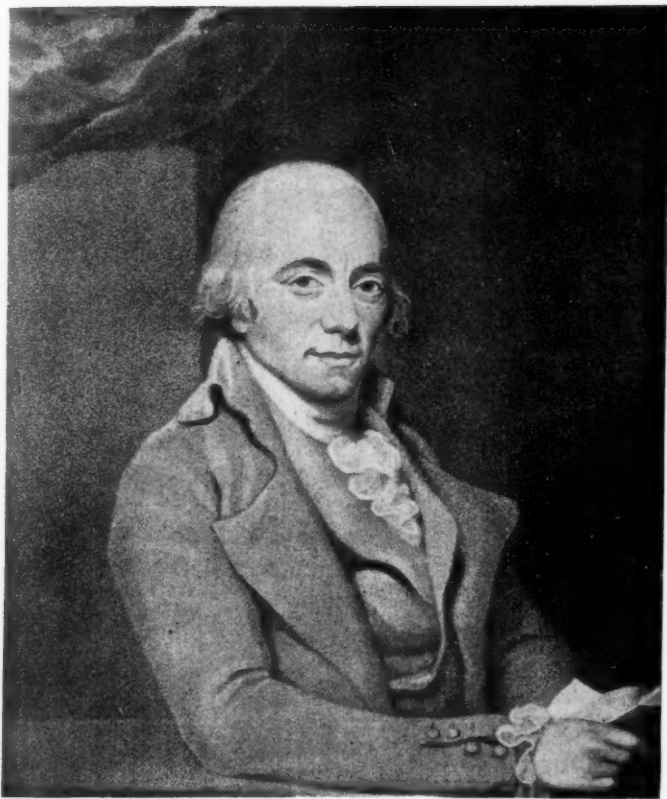
(1752-1832)

By GEORGES DE ST.-FOIX¹

MUZIO CLEMENTI will have been dead exactly one hundred years on March 10, 1932. Yet the time which has passed since the termination of his long career seems, in a manner well-nigh incommensurate, to exceed the normal duration of a century. How great the distance lying between 1832 and our own time! I am actually inclined to question whether, in the musical world to-day, it would be possible to find a single individual likely to give a thought to the fact that nearly a hundred years have gone by since the old master ceased to live. It is quite true that I entertain no wish to see the European capitals he so often visited hung in black on the occasion, for to me there is always something shocking at the sight of ungrateful humanity, at certain fixed dates, breaking forth into the commonplace or noisy rejoicings ordained for the precise day on which the calendar reverts to the anniversary date of a great man's death—that is to say, a date on which the common patrimony of humanity has been impoverished by the loss of all the productive wealth represented by the labors of the man of genius. It is almost as though, in each and every family, the memorial day of some ruin or disaster were to be regularly celebrated. Yet we need have no fears: there will be neither illuminations nor fireworks to set off in honor of Muzio Clementi. Will there be so much as a single musician, even, to recall the master's piano sonatas on that day, and place them on his piano rack? I cannot help but doubt it strongly.

The work which Clementi accomplished has, little by little, been forgotten in the most disdainful and injurious fashion. His art, his pupils, his own last compositions, all conspired against him, all were leagued to turn him into a pedagogue, albeit a remarkable one. For the majority of pianists—unfortunately, it is a real misfortune that they and they alone are familiar with Clementi's name—he has written excellent exercises to be used on their instrument; they are curiously mingled, it is true, with

¹This monograph was completed in November, 1921.—Ed.

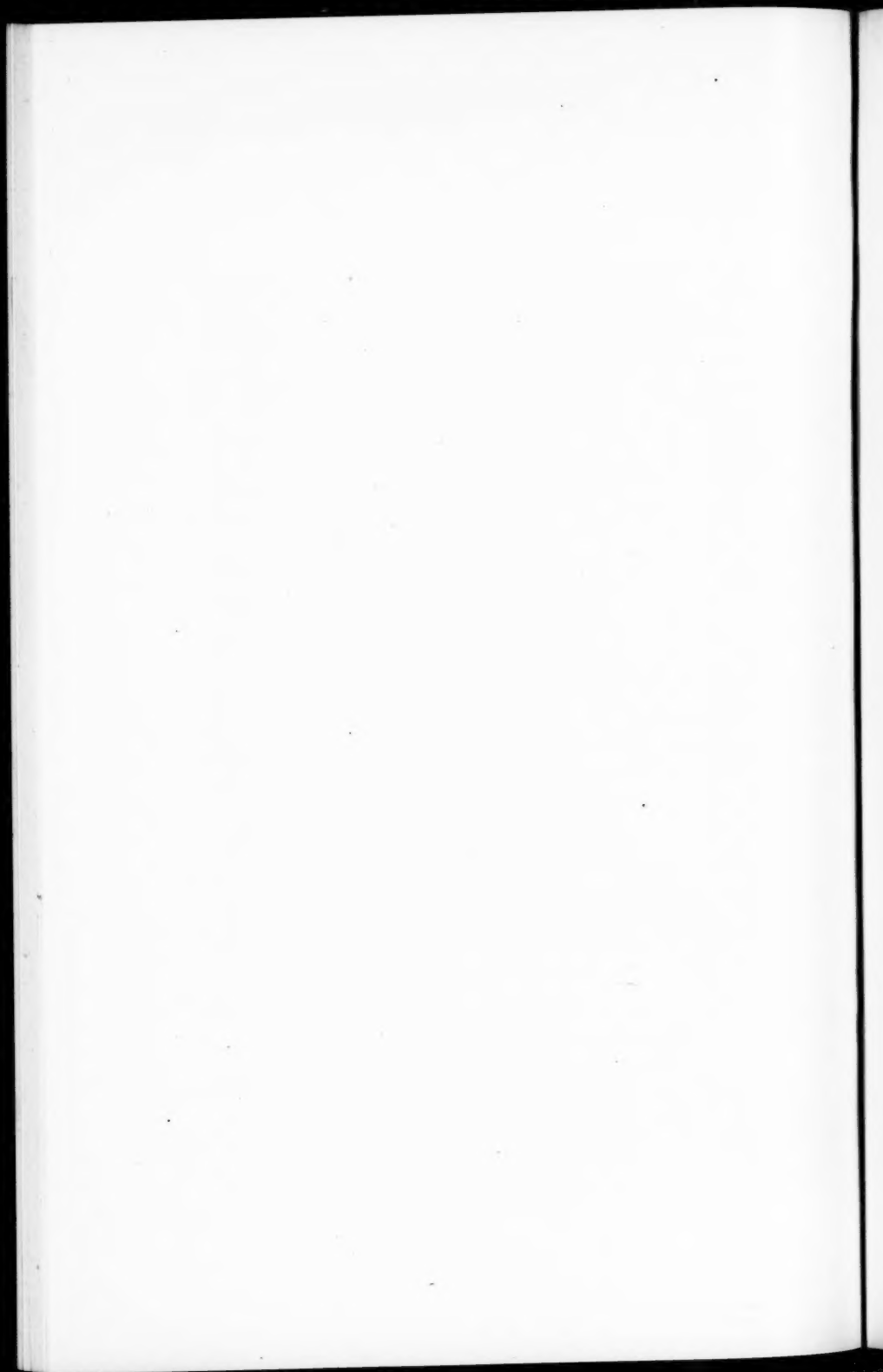


Painted & Engraved by T. Hardy

M. CLEMENTI,

From an Original Picture in the Possession of J. Clementi.

LONDON: Published at the Art-School in St. George's, Strand, by H. B. Row.



musical compositions which piano players of the present day have carefully rejected in order to confine themselves to publishing the exercises aforementioned in separate volumes. As a result, for most piano students there remains, of the grandiose monument which comprises the master's life and trends, no more than the "Gradus ad Parnassum" (1819-1825)—the exercises destined to make supple the fingers of the executant, that is to say the cement which lay between the magnificent stone quadrants of his piano edifice. And thus it is, also, little by little, that the work of one of the greatest "intellectuals" in all music has shifted over into the domain of pedagogy. This "pedagogue" is satisfied to publish, in the guise of a method, a very simple and succinct abridgement for the use of students, where exercises are replaced by lessons in good taste and style chosen from among the fragments of classic works, and followed by an interesting collection of English, French, Turkish and Russian, etc., popular airs; while, as already has been remarked, he mingles with the most grandiose symphonies and the most airy fantasies of his "Gradus ad Parnassum" exercises in virtuosity and style which are marvelously musical and to the point.

The phenomenon which has taken place with regard to Clementi is rather similar to that which once presided over the posthumous destinies of Johann Sebastian Bach. Toward the end of the eighteenth century it might have been said that the great German master, too—in so far as the majority of music-lovers and even musicians were concerned—had slipped into the skin of a decidedly wearisome pedagogue, whose work was just about good enough, at the most, to take the place of exercises. Is it not possible to see in the library of our own Paris Conservatoire a collection of the famous Sonatas for solo violin which quite bravely bears the title "Studio"? It should be said at once, of course, that the Roman pianist is unable to offer us, in order to shine forth more radiantly and gain greater honor, anything which approaches a "Passion according to Saint Matthew" or a "Mass in B Minor." Yet how similar the process by which he is established in our minds as, after all, no more than a remarkable piano teacher, the composer of studies which are excellent, though less modern than those of a Cramer or Czerny. What an analogy between the lack of consideration which to-day weighs down all that Clementi has done, and the disdain shown the composer of "The Well-Tempered Clavichord" for the space of a century or more! Yes, I have no hesitation in affirming that "The Well-Tempered Clavichord" of the present day is the "Gradus ad Parnassum." Read

these marvelous and solidly constructed Preludes, at once so archaic and so full of strength, cast an eye over these admirable figures, at the same time so weighty and so modern. Quasi-Wagnerian at times, they nevertheless always respect tradition, and are altogether impenetrated by the art of the great Cantor. Here, actually, standing on the threshold of our own epoch, a man transmits or rather restores to us, once and for all, the incomparable heritage of the past, clothing it in all the discoveries, all the seductive subtleties, all the magical reflections with which we love to adorn the grandiose and indestructible stones of ancient edifices. And this man, as once was the case with Sebastian Bach, is nothing more to most of us than a learned professor, whose art is invariably qualified as being rather "cold." Clementi, incidentally, we cannot help but admit it, himself contributed by reason of his life and the commercial occupations in which most of it was passed, toward allowing himself to be crushed by something which might be called "the distinguished consideration" of posterity. In providing for the disappearance of all those symphonies which seem to have been Clementi's ultimate artistic productions, in forcing him to busy himself with pupils and pupils only, and then to wander through long years all over Europe, a species of fatality reduced him to the rank of a nomad virtuoso, who might be said to have lost his voice or his fingers, and whose fame was useful to him only as a means of launching some unknown young pianists in the musical world. Furthermore, his commercial preoccupations, his rôle as the manufacturer and inventor of a new, perfected model of the *Piano forte*, suggested the idea that "mechanism" interested him quite as much as free musical creation. I believe that in Clementi's case the professional balanced the artist, and that the spirit which vivified his personality was essentially the outcome of the complexity of his nature. Clementi, as much through education as owing to natural aptitude, was an intellectual, a savant, a scholar, a thinker; he was, let us say—observing all the proportions—a species of musical Pascal. Hence his sudden fancy for astronomy, or again his profound knowledge of languages, and of Latin literature in particular, all this is explained by a kind of passionate curiosity of the intellect. I can well imagine him, after composing or playing one of his most splendid sonatas, opening his Virgil (as is well known, his last Sonata, Op. 50, the "Dido abbandonata," is nothing more nor less than a commentary on the famous episode in the *Æneid*), or reading a stellar chart, or consulting the old map of the world lying on his work-table. . . . That one day he is taken up with the foundation of a music publishing house, a musical

library, or on another he thinks of improving the mechanism of the piano and even of building a new one, appears to me quite a natural proceeding on the part of this admirable inventor. There have been numerous Italians who were at the same time artists, engineers and philosophers: Clementi is one of this family, and the diverse tendencies of his nature—each of which, separately considered, might supply material for an individual study in which he would appear in succession as the clavecinist and the pianist, the virtuoso and the creative artist, the piano manufacturer and the manager of a business house, and finally as the symphonist and founder of a new pianistic style—will disclose themselves in the account of his life which follows. We shall merely endeavor here to fix one of the most important moments in the musical life of Muzio Clementi, one in which his art causes him to rank with the great classics, and makes him one of the most authentic precursors of the most illustrious masters of the nineteenth century.¹

I

THE PIANIST: HIS CREATIVE EFFORT

Muzio Clementi was born in Rome, probably toward the end of January, 1752. It has been impossible to determine the exact date of his birth by documentary evidence, and altogether very little is known respecting the first years of his artistic education. His father, Niccolò Clementi, was by occupation a manufacturer of objects used in the cult of the richer churches, that is to say, an artist goldsmith; his mother's name was Madeleine Kayser. There is reason to believe that his first teachers were representatives of the large school of Roman polyphonists. Biographers mention in particular Buroni, Carpani and Cordicelli, all choir-masters, who made it possible for young Clementi at the age of twelve to write a mass for two choirs. To the contrapuntal teaching of these old masters is probably due the astonishing technical solidity of Clementi's workmanship.

It has been our good fortune to discover one of the first specimens of his clavecin compositions: an entirely unknown Sonata, preserved in the library of the Paris Conservatoire. It bears the following title: "Sonata per Cembalo di Muzio Clementi. Composta nell'anno 1765," and underneath this, "No. 20," which would seem to indicate that since the age of thirteen he had writ-

¹With regard to this account of the details of Clementi's life, it has been based on the recent and only complete biography of the master, published by Max Unger: *Muzio Clementis Leben*. Hermann Beyer und Sohn, Langensalza, 1914, I vol.

ten several series of sonatas for his instrument. The Sonata in question, in A flat minor, already very individual, consists of three movements, and is suggestive of the style of Galuppi rather than that of Scarlatti. We shall, however, refrain from insisting on such affiliations, since we are practically ignorant of all that concerns the school of clavicinists which flourished at Rome in the days when Clementi made his début. One thing appears to be quite certain: it is that the boy, as early as 1765, enjoyed a complete technical mastery of his instrument, and of the elements of musical composition.

Toward 1766 a wealthy Englishman, Sir Peter Beckford, had an opportunity of hearing him in Rome. Captivated by the boy's already remarkable talent and his intelligence, he "hired" him from his father for a period of six years, and at once took him with him to England, to his estate in Dorset County. Charged with the duty of dissipating the spleen of his rich patron, the young Italian passed all his leisure moments in a magnificent library, and profiting by his quasi-imprisonment he acquired, on his own initiative, an extensive literary education. His musical science, too, was extended and fortified by the constant study of the works of Händel, of Scarlatti, and of Johann Sebastian Bach, whose youngest son, John Christian, then famous and living in England, was soon to initiate Clementi into the charm of a style light, essentially "gallant," and qualified beyond any other to modify the ardors and explosions of the young man's already audacious and powerful art. This life in retreat, as laborious as it was profound, lasted nearly seven years, in the course of which Clementi wrote his Op. 1,¹ most likely between 1766 and 1770; as well as the collection Op. 11 (about 1770, but not published until 1773), which was to make a dazzling sensation and, something rare and strange, serve as a point of departure for the future fame of the renovator of the *piano forte*.

Between the time when he probably left Fonthill Abbey in order to establish himself in London (at the beginning of 1773), and the date of his first great journey to the Continent (toward the middle of 1780), stretches a period of obscurity, one dark as regards both Clementi's life and his compositions: not a single one of his published works bears the date of these years. He must still have been at Fonthill Abbey when he wrote his Op. 4, and

¹The original manuscripts of the first three sonatas of Op. 1 are preserved in the library of the Paris Conservatoire. The first, in its entirety, and the finale of the second, correspond to the version in the Welcker edition; the other movements, though beginning in the same way, are altogether different.

we must await his stay in Paris, in 1780, before we see him give a successor to his first collection of compositions: the two important collections Op. 5 and 6, in fact, were brought out by the publisher Baillot in Paris toward the end of the last-mentioned year.

His pen, therefore, was but little used or, perhaps, was altogether idle during these first years of the young musician's contact with the English capital; but his fingers, at any rate, did not rest. His first appearance in public—or, at all events, the first appearance mentioned in the papers—was on April 3, 1775. It was at a concert given by a harpist, a certain M. Jones, one which figures as the third number on the programme, a concerto by an unknown composer, played on the harpsichord or clavecin by Clementi. The oboist Parke (brother of the one who wrote his "Musical Memoirs") and the famous 'cellist Cervetto took part in this performance. Clementi's presence among the interpreting artists is furthermore mentioned in connection with several other concerts given during 1778 and 1779; but the papers have nothing to say with regard to his activities as orchestral conductor of the Italian Theater in London (the King's Haymarket Theatre) from 1777 to 1780. Nevertheless, quite a long time afterward, Clementi, in the presence of his pupil Louis Berger, in 1806, and before Anton Schindler, in 1827, explained in detail the modifications which his style underwent owing to the influence of the Italian singers, during these very years in question. His interpretative style, too, was modified, and in spite of the absence of all documentary proof, the importance of the change to which Clementi's art was subjected after he had left the solitary library of Beckford to live among the actors and singers who divided the favor of the London public, cannot be denied. So evident was the fact that one of his most intimate friends, W. F. Collard, later makes special mention of it in his "Apollo's Gift to the Musical Souvenir for 1831," in which he traces the master's biography.

Yet for us this is not the point of departure of the veritable and decisive "crisis" which was to betray itself in a complete overturning of Clementi's existing art and style. Evidently influenced by the music of France, the young man's powerful and audacious nature already reveals itself in the celebrated collection Op. 2, a literally explosive document. Clementi's stay in Paris—where he must have arrived toward the middle of the year 1780 and where, from the first time he was heard in public, his playing scored the liveliest success—his sojourn in the French capital transformed him to such a degree that without any appreciable transition, with absolute brusqueness, the pupil and continuant of Christian

Bach became Beethoven's most authentic precursor. We have only to read the first sonata contained in Op. 5, the Sonata in E flat minor, published in Paris by Bailleux and dedicated to Mlle. Mélanie Rochechouart.¹

All the conquests which the romanticists of the future, including Schumann, were to make, already are realized here, and we ask how any man, even a Clementi, was able to give us, as early as 1780, so authoritative a revelation of what the piano music of the nineteenth century was going to resemble. More than this: when we remember that this very Clementi had hitherto, under the head of important and characteristic works, produced only this famous Op. 2, we are well-nigh overcome.

Opus 6 (A duo; two sonatas and three fugues, dedicated—like the second Op. 5—to the Countess of Sayn-Wittgenstein) offers the same astonishing pre-Beethovenian character. The problem is one which should be of liveliest interest to historical criticism. Our own lack of special knowledge does not, without displaying presumption, allow us to propose a solution; yet it seems permissible to call attention to the importance of the shock which Clementi received as soon as he came in contact with French music. The theatre, with its tragedies of pathos and the probable influence of a decidedly important and interesting school of German and Alsatian pianists, descended, we believe, from Jean Schobert—the school of Hüllmandel, Edelmann, Rigel, Adam and others—to which we must not forget to add the music heard or played in the great concerts, all this may well have reacted strongly enough on young Clementi's soul and art to explain the enormous progress which showed itself in his work from the earliest time of his sojourn in France. His altogether modern handling of the *piano forte*, the maturing of his ideas, which in no wise injures the irresistible impulse of inspiration, these are the conquests which, one after another, were realized by Clementi as soon as he reached Paris.

After having remained in France more than a year Clementi went to Vienna toward the middle of the year 1781. Though his important stay in Paris does not seem to have left any traces in the newspapers, his journey to Vienna—whither it is possible he went on the recommendation of Queen Marie-Antoinette—is marked by an account of a tourney which has become famous,

¹Clementi's Op. 4 (Sonatas for piano with violin and flute *ad lib.*) was announced in December, 1780; it is probable that Op. 5 appeared in the first months of 1781, in Paris. Another Op. 5 by Clementi (Six Sonatas for clavessin, dedicated to the Countess of Sayn-Wittgenstein) was brought out by the same publisher, Bailleux.

and in which, before the Emperor Francis Joseph II, the brother of Marie-Antoinette, he measured forces with Mozart, on the evening of December 24, 1781. We reproduce the account of this famous episode as Clementi himself described it, several years later, in 1806, to one of his best pupils, the pianist and composer Louis Berger:

No sooner had I been established a few days in Vienna, than I received an invitation from the Emperor, who wished to hear me play on the *forte piano*. When I entered the music room I encountered a person who, owing to his elegant exterior, made me think him a chamberlain. No sooner had we engaged in conversation than the latter at once began to turn on matters musical. We soon realized that we were brother artists—that is to say, Mozart and Clementi—and greeted each other amicably.

Never, at any later time, have I heard anyone play with such fire and expression. An *Adagio* and several variations improvised on a theme chosen by the Emperor, and which we had to subject to further variation, one of us accompanying the other, alternately filled me with surprise and admiration.

The recollection of this memorable evening must have remained graven on Clementi's memory, for, when he published the series of his complete works, brought out by the publisher Breitkopf in 1806, he did not forget to mention, at the head of the Second Sonata in Book VI, that "This Sonata, together with the Toccata which follows it, was played by the composer before H. I. M. Joseph II, in 1781; Mozart being present on the occasion."

According to Clementi's own confession, this Sonata still belongs to the brilliant and exterior type which he cultivated with a view to throwing into relief his gifts as a performer, before he had been able to adapt the latter to the new English *forte piano*, which called for a more noble and singing interpretation; and before he had devoted greater attention to the art of the famous contemporary singers. In the first place the composer still employs the free cadenza left to the taste of the player, as was customary in the concerto. This definite confession on Clementi's part to a certain extent justifies the severe strictures passed by Mozart on the playing and the compositions of the skillful "mechanician" of the *piano forte*. Strange to say, the Sonata selected by Clementi and played by him on that memorable evening of December 24, 1781, seems to have furnished Mozart with the motive which serves as the theme for the overture in "The Magic Flute." Incidentally, it is unquestionable that Mozart was impressed very vividly by the appearance of the collections Op.

7 to Op. 10, which the publisher Artaria put forth during Clementi's stay in Vienna. These collections mark a further degree of progress attained by the Roman pianist, and this progress is, in part, perhaps, due to Mozart, whose influence is attested by several of these sonatas. Yet Clementi's language remains powerful and vigorous; his originality is shown forth in brusque and pathetic modulations; and the idiom he uses more than ever recalls Beethoven, whose imperious accent we seem to hear on more than one occasion.

These important collections were published in Vienna in the spring of 1782 and 1783, a period during which Joseph Haydn, through the intermediation of Artaria, addressed his compliments to the composer of the new sonatas. Like other leading Viennese musicians of that day, the future composer of "The Seasons" must have made the acquaintance of the young Italian master at this time.

It is probable that Clementi remained in Vienna no more than six months: in fact, on April 29, 1782, we find him in Lyons, where he arrived after traversing Switzerland. He had once more returned to settle in this great French city after a sufficiently brief stay in London, for at the beginning of the following year a most important romantic episode, and one destined to play a great part in Clementi's life and his career as an artist, supplies the key to the enigma, and explains the young master's prolonged sojourn in Lyons, as well as the mention of his name among the "professors of music" established in that city. I borrow the account of what occurred from the admirable preface which my much regretted teacher and friend Teodor de Wyzewa wrote for the two collections of "Twenty Sonatas" by Clementi which he edited for the publisher Senart:

Clementi had left Vienna toward the middle of 1782, with the intention of returning to London after having given a series of concerts along the road. He had stopped at Zürich, and probably at Geneva, and reached Lyons, where his *académie* took place, on August 29th. Now it happened, the day after this *séance*, that one of the most notable citizens of Lyons, the banker Imbert-Colomès—who had become one of the chiefs of the royalist party in Lyons during the French Revolution—had begged the Roman pianist to do him the favor of giving his oldest daughter, Marie-Françoise-Victoire, a girl of sixteen, some lessons. There is no doubt that the pupil combined with her musical talents quite special personal attractions; for instead of continuing his journey to London, Clementi, in order to be able to go on giving lessons to Mlle. Victoire Imbert-Colomès, decided to establish himself in Lyons; where, until the year following, his name figured among the names of the professional "masters of the clavecin." Then, in the spring of the year

1784, when the young man went back again to London (where the number of his pupils had greatly increased, and where in addition he had become a collaborator in the foundation of a very successful project of public concerts), he suddenly brusquely abandoned his new concerts and lessons, and returning to France—or, to be more exact, Savoy—was there at once joined by Mlle. Victoire Imbert-Colomès.¹ The two lovers had already made all their preparations to marry and to spend several months in Italy when, on the demand of the young girl's father, the Governor of Chambéry separated them, sending back the beautiful Victoire to her family, and ordering Clementi to leave the country under pain of imprisonment. The composer, desperate, thereupon took refuge in Berne, where at first—if we are to believe the strangely interesting testimony of a school-teacher of the locality—he meditated giving up music forever. By degrees, however, his passion for his art once more took complete possession of him; and it was there in Berne, during his long weeks of solitude, that the idea of a musical "revolution" was perfected by him, a fact attested in particular by his three collections of sonatas, Op. 13, 14 and 15, of which the last two are expressly dedicated to Mlle. Victoire Imbert-Colomès of Lyons.

These new collections: Sonatas for piano, Op. 13, dedicated to the Count von Brühl; Sonatas for piano four-hands, Op. 14, dedicated to Mlle. Victoire Imbert-Colomès; and Sonatas for piano and violin, Op. 15, bearing the same dedication, must have been composed immediately after what might be called the "passionate drama" of Lyons. They show an elevation, a maturity, a power of conception which place them among Clementi's most perfect compositions; and they are those in which one feels most directly the expression of an ardent and concentrated passion, altogether romantic and already Beethovenian. It is quite self-apparent that they were conceived under the influence of one of those crises of the soul which are so strangely productive in an artist's life. And it is more than likely that it was in this Bernese solitude, in which the despairing musician took refuge *incognito* and where, perhaps, he had relatives,² that he was led to write the greater part of his wonderful works.

II

THE SYMPHONIST

Threatened with arrest after carrying off his Lyonese beloved, it seems as though Clementi sought to surround himself with the

¹This interesting account is, actually, the first biographical sketch of Clementi and has served as a principal source for all his biographers. Its accuracy is beyond all doubt.

²His mother, Madeleine Kayser, may have been of Swiss descent.

deepest mystery during the months which followed that memorable event. The fact remains that very little is known regarding his existence between 1783 and 1785. It does appear that he returned to London toward the end of 1784, since beginning with that year the "Grand Professional Concerts at Hanover Square" were assured of his assistance; yet he did not become "composer, conductor and soloist" of the said Concerts until the year 1786. In 1785 he did not appear in concert at all and contented himself with publishing the famous collections—Op. 13 to 16—upon whose beauty we have already had occasion to dwell.¹ It was not until February 6, 1786, that his First Symphony was played by the orchestra of the society already mentioned, and that on the 10th of the same month his Second was performed under the title of "New Overture."

At the sixth, eighth, eleventh and twelfth concerts, which followed, the programmes listed symphonies by Clementi; and if we take the titles of "New Symphony" and "New Overture" and "New Symphonia" literally, the Roman master would have produced five symphonies in the course of the year 1786. Among them are two which were published, Op. 18² in London by Longman & Broderip, and Op. 44 by André in Offenbach. This did not prevent Clementi from appearing as an interpreting artist in various concerts, so that we may regard this year of 1786 as one of his most fruitful and active ones.

From this moment on, moreover, we are obliged to testify to the fact that Clementi is no longer merely a remarkable master of the piano, but has become a symphonist as well. The orchestral dream vision which he bore in his inner consciousness took on a tonal body, and to the end of his life remained one of the most cherished and vivid of all his artistic preoccupations. In fact, from this time on, he writes for the piano only works of a light and gallant nature, in most cases intended to please the London amateurs. He continues to play in the "Grand Professional Concerts" and in this connection he inaugurated, toward 1788, a style of composition new with him, that of the *Sonata Concertata*, a species of concerto or concert sonata without accompaniment, in which the radiance of his puissant and splendid talent shone in isolated splendor. At times, yet more rarely, he played together

¹Clementi's Op. 8 was published in Lyons, and contains a Sonata dedicated to Mlle. Imbert-Colomès. The permission to print accorded the publisher, the Sieur Castaud, is dated January 13, 1784 (Michel Brenet: *La librairie musicale en France de 1655 à 1790*). Op. 12 is announced on June 11, 1784, in the *London Public Advertiser*.

²See *London Morning Chronicle*, May 9, 1787.

with famous instrumentalists and presented, in the shape of a "Nouvelle Concertante," a trio which he had composed for *piano forte*, violin and obbligato 'cello (May 5, 1789).

In 1790 Clementi appeared in two concerts only, in which he played concertos for his instrument (February 28th and May 14th); these probably belonged to the category of "Concertantes" that have just been described.

Notwithstanding this his pupil, Louis Berger, declared that the First Sonata in C, Op. 34, was originally a concerto; and the second, in G minor, a "Symphony." Is it possible that the former is the very concerto "played by the Master at the 'Professional Concerts' in 1790"? At all events, this statement by Berger seems to us to be of the highest importance: it proves to us that Clementi is now only seemingly a pianist. The greatest and most touching compositions for his instrument, in most cases, will be no more than piano reductions of works originally conceived for the orchestra.¹

The presentation of the Haydn symphonies in London and the well-nigh unprecedented success at once accorded them may also have played a determining part in the instrumental predilections manifested by Clementi ever since 1786. His admiration for the works of the Austrian master increased, if anything, with the latter's first visit to London in 1791, and the series of triumphs to which each succeeding new work of Haydn's gave rise does not in any way appear to have given offence to Clementi's decidedly noble character. Notwithstanding, it is beyond all doubt that Haydn's presence in London was prejudicial to every other composer of music. This, however, did not prevent Clementi's having one of his own symphonies played, on March 25th of that year, at the Salomon Concerts—for which Haydn had destined his two new and famous series of symphonies—possibly the grandiose Symphony in G minor, which he reduced for piano as already mentioned; and on May 23rd, a "New Overture." A German musicographer, Theodor von Karajan, in a booklet devoted to Haydn's first visit to London, claims that during the year in question there were played at the Salomon Concerts "... new compositions by Muzio Clementi, in place of those of Haydn; in short that everything possible was done to make the former hold his own with honor beside the concerts given by Haydn. Hence Clementi composed a new symphony, which had a decisive success when performed. But in trying to crush Haydn's productions, the

¹This is probably the case with regard to several of his greatest sonatas, in Op. 36 and Op. 40.

Clementi symphony which had just been applauded was succeeded, in the second section of the same concert, by an old Haydn symphony, long since published, in the hope that the latter would be less successful. Yet a directly opposite effect was produced, for it gave greater pleasure, and thereupon Clementi showed the excess of his irritation with regard to the choice (so unfortunate for him) which had been made."¹ Is it not likely that there is an error of date here, and that the incident mentioned by Karajan refers to a "Grand Symphony" by Clementi played March 24, 1795, and whose lack of success Haydn himself notes in his *Agenda*?² For my own part, I find that nothing legitimates a supposition of this kind. The fact is that a symphonic work was played in 1791; perhaps, we repeat, that symphony from Op. 34 whose magnificent grandeur "met with decisive appreciation"—which did not prevent the same auditors from giving a greater tribute of applause to the familiar rhythms of the old Haydn symphony, long since known in London, and, incidentally, more easily accessible to the listeners than the audacious and altogether "modern" inventions of the Roman master.

The following year there arrived in London a young man who had already become famous, Ignaz Pleyel, a pupil of Haydn, who now rejoined his teacher. Pleyel, whose reputation toward the end of the eighteenth century was, as regards the public, nearly as brilliant as that of Haydn or Mozart, gave the English abundant proofs of his qualities as a composer and a performer. His name at once appeared in the Concerts, together with the names of Haydn and Clementi. In order to keep his place among such celebrities Pleyel, in 1792, had a work he himself had written played by each of the rival concert organizations: an "Overture" (Symphony), given at the Salomon Concerts on February 24th, and also at the 11th Professional Concert. At the first of these concerts a quartet by Gyrowetz and—for the first time—a chorus by Haydn entitled "The Tempest" were heard; at the second two new compositions by Pleyel, a quartet and a "Concertante" for two violins, interpreted by the Cramer brothers, figured in the programme. Neither of these "Overtures" by Clementi are prefaced by the adjective "New," hence it might seem to be a question of compositions already performed. On February 14, 1793, however, a "New Overture," in manuscript, was played at the Professional Concerts, and turned out to be an event in the

¹Theodor von Karajan. *Josef Haydn in London, 1791-1792*, p. 34.

²J. E. Engl: *Joseph Haydn's handschriftliches Tagebuch, 1794-1795*, p. 18.

master's symphonic career, for the work scored such a success that it had to be repeated at the following concert, on February 27th. Clementi's pupils Bertini or Cramer often executed his music in the Concerts, in which he more rarely appeared himself, and when Haydn, returning to London in 1794, once more took first place in the favor of the public, the part of Clementi became one still more effaced. Toward the end of the year the latter played at Salomon's Benefit Concert, and when these concerts emigrated the following year to the King's Theatre—they were then given the name of "Opera Concerts"—Clementi appeared in them but once, on February 16, 1795, with a "New Grand Symphony" which was played twice, as the concluding number of each of the two halves of the programme. A month later, on March 24th, a "New Grand Overture" in manuscript, by Clementi, was conducted by the composer at a benefit concert given by Mlle. Mara. It is this affair which Haydn has described in his *Agenda*, and to which we have already alluded. According to the *Agenda* Clementi's new work was not successful, and Haydn seems far more impressed by a little scandal which occurred at the supper given after the concert in honor of Mlle. Mara, who had her unfortunate husband thrown out of the room and herself, the day after, hurried off in the direction of the fashionable watering-place of Bath, accompanied, so Haydn tells us, by her *cigisbée*.

When the time came for the aged master to leave London, and to receive as parting gifts a thousand and one presents and souvenirs as an earnest of admiration, Clementi did not forget him, and despite the avarice with which he has been reproached by the majority of his biographers, offered Haydn "a goblet of cocoanut wood encrusted with silver."

And now that Haydn is gone, Clementi again resumes his place in the Salomon Concerts, which announce that "he will furnish the Society with his new compositions." The assistance of various brilliant artists has been secured: the violinist Janiewicz, the pianists Dussek and J. B. Cramer. Beginning with the third concert, on March 3rd, Clementi keeps his promise: the audience hears a "New Symphony" by him, the last "New Symphony" he was to write during the eighteenth century. Not until twenty years later, in 1813, will his English auditors have an opportunity of once more listening to a new symphonic cycle, long matured and thought out, by the already sexagenarian musician. Yet at the sixth concert, on March 31, 1796, they heard another "Grand Symphony" by Clementi, "which he had written the year preceding for the Opera Concerts." The criticism printed in the

Morning Chronicle showed a warmth and an enthusiasm in all probability rare enough in the case of an English audience: "A grand symphony by Clementi, written for the Opera Concerts last season, was performed with alteration this (sixth) evening and produced a very sensible and captivating effect. The second movement was loudly encored; and not only the Musicians and Connoisseurs, but the whole room, were equally warm in their expression of pleasure and approbation."¹

This terminates what might be called the first part of Clementi's "symphonic" career; for it seems in no wise an exaggeration thus to qualify this manifestation of his artistic activity during the decennary from approximately 1787 to 1797. One might even say, in fact, that with a few exceptions all Clementi's piano compositions during this time are merely light, gallant pieces, marvelously well adapted, incidentally, to the instrument and the often modest capabilities of the player. Or, when it comes to the grand sonatas of superior breadth and import which date from this time, we find in most cases that we are dealing with works which were primarily conceived for the orchestra and which are, in their existing form, no more than "reductions" for piano which, however, have been made by Clementi himself.²

With regard to the series of compositions which, for the most part light and elegant in style, were written from approximately the beginning of the year 1788 to the year 1795 (Op. 20 to 33), they often include admirable trios full of life and spirit (Op. 21, 22; Op. 28, 29; Op. 30, 32, 37); and also reworkings of older compositions of the composer's youth (Op. 33); or, again, curious transcriptions of Domenico Scarlatti Sonatas (Op. 27). Yet the great creative period of 1780 to 1786 comes to an end, and it seems as though Clementi loses interest in his art as a pianist in order to devote himself to the developing of instrumental compositions which become increasingly vast and expressive.

III

THE MUSIC PUBLISHER, PIANO MANUFACTURER AND BUSINESS MAN

Beginning with 1797 Clementi gave up appearing in public altogether: his name is no longer mentioned in connection with any

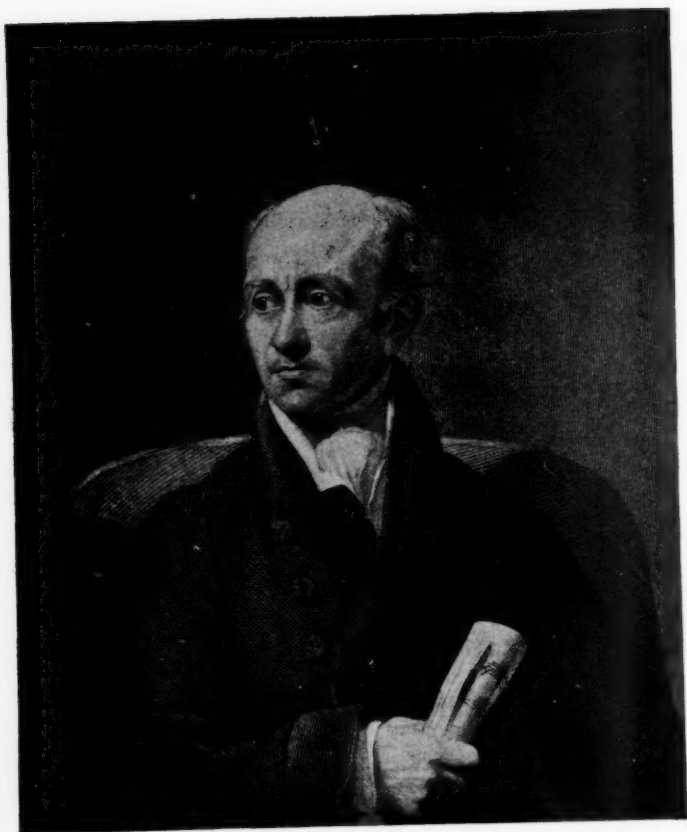
¹*Morning Chronicle*, April 3, 1796.

²We have already mentioned that the two sonatas, Op. 34, were respectively, the one a Concerto and the other a Grand Symphony; and as we have said, it is more than likely that the Grand Sonatas of Op. 36 and Op. 40 were developed, most of them, out of the Symphony.

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Engraved by J. Smith from a portrait by Sir J. Reynolds

MUZIO CLEMENTI, ESQ^R

From the original Picture by J. Lawrence Esq^r

Published by J. Smith, at the Theatre Royal, in Pall Mall, London.

concert. Was this due to his increasing interest in astronomy? Had he become indifferent to virtuoso success? The complex nature of the Roman master makes the question a difficult one to answer. Yet it is not venturing too much to suppose that the living conditions at an epoch when the great revolutionary disturbances had hardly been appeased presented to the people of that time problems analogous to those with which we are confronted to-day, and that an artist may have been constrained, or at least tempted, to solve them, so to speak, outside the immediate circle of his art. Did not Viotti become a wine merchant in London at about the same time? Given his tact in availing himself of the numerous connections which he had created for himself in England, Clementi would not have had any great difficulty in finding a new "business." After having associated himself, in 1798, with Longman & Hyde, and later with Longman & Broderip, he founded a music-publishing house and selling business, to which was added an establishment devoted to the manufacture of grand pianos, which from the year 1799 on bore the firm name of "Longman, Clementi & Co." The main office was at 62 Cheapside; branches were located in the Haymarket and in Tottenham Court Road.

Alas, the venture did not begin happily! At the beginning of the year 1800 Longman & Broderip went into bankruptcy, and the partners in their business lost part of their capital. Yet this did not discourage Clementi. After 1800 the firm was reborn under the name of "Clementi & Co."; after 1820, established on a solid foundation, it was in the hands of Clementi & Collard; finally, after 1832, the date of the master's death, it passed under the direction of Collard & Collard, old friends of Clementi, under which name, unless we are mistaken, it is still in existence at the present day.

From the very beginning of his association with commerce, Clementi had maintained regular business relations with the large music-publishing houses of the Continent: Artaria in Vienna, Pleyel in Paris. In 1799 and 1800 he is already negotiating with the firm of Breitkopf in Leipsic, which was then publishing the first books of Mozart's and Haydn's works, and offering them a new London publisher. He then reduced for piano important excerpts from the new Haydn oratorios, "The Creation" and "The Seasons," and also superintended the manufacture of large and small pianos, and watched over the exchange of music between Paris and London. In brief, his occupations and his sources of revenue multiplied. Clementi had the genius of the artist; but

he also had that of the mechanic who invents new instruments as he invents a new style. Intelligent and well-informed, he is the type of man especially apt at happily accomplishing the most dissimilar tasks, of keeping in touch with the most diverse correspondents, connections facilitated by his knowledge of various foreign languages. From 1799 to approximately 1801 there is a period of activity actually astonishing in its diversity. Clementi has become a merchant, a manufacturer and creator of new instruments; yet he does not forget that he is also a professional, a celebrated piano teacher, and in 1801 he publishes his "Introduction to the Art of Playing the Piano," a small book whose simplicity and elementary character surprise us, and which was to become the prototype of the great piano methods of the first half of the nineteenth century, such as that by L. Adam, for instance.

And this small book was to be the sole fruit of the so-called "pedagogic" ability of Clementi, one of the rare few capable of constructing the most valid, the most scholarly of piano methods. Whether it be in his art or in his life, Clementi arranges more than one surprise for those who may be tempted to study either the one or the other.

For more than twenty years the Roman master had not left the land of his adoption, and nevertheless, a thousand projects, both commercial and artistic, demanded his presence on the Continent. In 1802, at the Peace of Amiens, he availed himself of the favorable opportunity offered, and toward the middle of July he embarked for the Continent with a young pupil, John Field, a few Nocturnes by whom,¹ witnesses of a very short life and an art altogether new, were to herald to the piano world the approach of Chopin.

Then, with the summer of 1802, Clementi, across a Europe whose roads were still thronged with soldiers, undertakes a series of peregrinations which do not come to an end until 1810. The pupils who accompany him serve to "show off" at once the value of his teaching and of his pianos, which last they play in a brilliant manner for "the customer." From Paris, where he stayed with Pleyel, Clementi went to Vienna, where he stopped with Artaria: his publishers and correspondents are his friends as well, and the hospitality which they offer him largely lessens the considerable expenses of his journeys from place to place. Strange to say, this man obsessed with the spirit of economy, and who in order to

¹Beginning with the year 1801, Clementi had published Field's compositions; and the young artist, upon arriving in Paris, published his first book of sonatas, which he dedicated to Clementi.

reduce every expense devotes time to the most detailed calculation, this same man inspires the pupils who accompany him and whom he rations in Spartan fashion, with the most genuine affection and devotion. Thus when in Vienna Clementi wished to confide young Field to a teacher for whom, because of his purely scientific contrapuntal attainments, he had conceived the highest admiration, J. Albrechtsberger,¹ Field was so greatly chagrined at the thought of leaving his master, that the latter was touched, and giving up his intention took Field with him to Russia. It was there, incidentally, that the young Irish pianist was to establish himself definitely, and immediately to become, thanks to his personal charm and that of his playing, the favorite of the higher social circles of St. Petersburg. Yet the whole journey, so far as Clementi is concerned, had only a purely commercial interest.

His business in the Russian capital was neither musical composition nor the public display of his great virtuosity—for he had, so to say, given up playing in public—but the establishment and proper exploitation of the products of his piano factory. Once the reputation of his pianos had been solidly established, Clementi left Russia with a new pupil, Karl Zeuner, and went to Berlin, where he arrived on July 27, 1803. He stopped there but a few days which, however, were to count in his life, met a few artists and entered a circle of *littérateurs* and poets in which he made the acquaintance of Caroline Lehmann, a young girl of eighteen, whose musical talent and, above all, whose charm, a mingling of wit and beauty, at once caused several miracles to eventuate. Clementi, in fact, consented to play before her and for her, and in the presence of this circle of young German intellectuals. And Muzio Clementi, already more than fifty-one, after a few days became the *fiancé* of this young Muse of eighteen, whom he bore away from the circle of her passionate admirers, among them Chamisso, who later dedicated one of his sonnets to "Caroline."

This sudden romance, followed by the pledge supreme, did not prevent Clementi from thinking of business and from going to Dresden, in August, 1803, where he allied himself with the publisher Härtel of Leipsic. The latter, beginning with the following year, was to publish the complete works of the Roman master. From Dresden he went to Vienna, accompanied by his pupil Klengel. In Vienna Clementi was willing to play for no one but the Empress, who presented him with a gold snuff-box filled with

¹In the rich collection published by Clementi under the title "Practical Harmony" (four volumes), Albrechtsberger's compositions occupy no less than 84 pages (Unger, p. 119).

ducats. As for the common run of mortals, it had become out of the question for them to hear Clementi play. He has mattresses placed against the doors of the room in which he seats himself at the piano, and places an eider-down coverlet on the instrument itself; for he practices every day and plays his favorite Sonata in A.¹

It was, in all probability, during this stay in Vienna that Clementi had an opportunity of meeting Haydn and Beethoven. He planned to obtain the works of these two great masters, and was unsuccessful only in the case of Haydn, who was in the habit of sending his latest compositions to Breitkopf & Härtel, which firm paid him 25 ducats for every group of three. As regards his relations with Beethoven, it seems as though it took several years before the two masters exchanged a single word. Each accompanied by a pupil, they were accustomed to dine in the "Swan" inn, saluting each other courteously, and with the salute their intercourse ended. Several months passed in this manner, Clementi preoccupied with his pupils, his business affairs, and, so it is said, by reading; his taste for the old Greek and Latin classics growing more and more pronounced. In the spring of 1804 he went to Zürich and there promised to collaborate in the "Nouveau Répertoire des Clavecinistes" of Naegeli, who announces "new productions" by Clementi.

At the beginning of 1804 the publishers Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipsic, assured in advance of the result, had already put forth several books of their complete edition of Clementi's works; and the latter, with his habitual conscientiousness and exactitude in matters of detail, came to Leipsic himself in order to superintend the publication and revision of his works, several of which appeared "with extensive improvements made by the composer during his stay in Leipsic in 1804."² When he left the city the sixth volume, containing the Sonata in C, and the two magnificent "Caprices" in A and in F, had appeared; and master and pupil are on the way back to Berlin on August 2, 1804.

A few weeks later, on September 18th, the marriage projected the preceding year was celebrated, and the newly-wedded pair at once took their honeymoon flight across the Alps. Clementi wished to show his wife the city of his birth which, we must not forget, was also the Eternal City, and there he resided in the home of his brother, Gaetano Clementi. Since true happiness has no

¹Probably Op. 36, No. 1.

²The ninth volume appeared toward the end of 1806.

history, it is quite natural that no reminiscences of this voyage have been handed down to us; all we know is that Clementi did not touch a single piano while in Italy, "where all the pianos are poor."

No sooner had he returned to Berlin, in the spring of 1805, than a great misfortune overtook Clementi: his young wife, no more than twenty years of age, gently took her departure from this world while presenting him with a son, on August 17, 1805.¹ And the hapless musician, in desperation, sought to distract himself: he organized concerts in Livonia, in Esthonia, he stopped in Riga and, still accompanied by his pupils Berger and Klengel, arrived in St. Petersburg in May, 1806. Increasingly obsessed by this feverish desire for movement, to which more than one page of his music testifies, Clementi left Russia at the end of a few months, and again came to Vienna, at the end of November, lodging with his new friends, the publishers Artaria. This sojourn in Vienna, which was to be troubled the following year by new catastrophies, permitted him to enter into direct relations—especially commercial ones—with Beethoven. On April 22, 1807, he wrote that he and Beethoven had "finally become good friends," and that they had signed a contract according to which the German master ceded to him the rights to some of his most important compositions: the Fourth Symphony, the three Rasoumoffsky Quartets, the Overture to "Coriolanus," the Violin Concerto and the Piano Concerto in G. Clementi now entertained a thousand new plans and projects; he dreamed of composing a German oratorio; meditated a grand tour of Spain and Portugal; and frequented the most distinguished artistic *salons* of Vienna, where the charm and culture of his mentality were appreciated, yet where it was found impossible to induce him to play even a single time. Two new misfortunes were destined to signalize the beginning of the year 1807 for him: in March the news reached him that a terrible fire had destroyed his London piano factory. The loss was placed at £40,000, of which sum £15,000 was not covered by insurance; and the war in addition complicated the situation in general. Clementi, in order to exist, saw himself obliged to sell the rings and snuff-boxes which sovereigns had bestowed upon him in the course of his travels. Nor was this all: while a thousand difficulties relative to the carrying out of his contracts developed, while Beethoven and Clementi himself were asserting their rights, the news of his brother's sudden death called him

¹Charles Clementi, who had inherited genuine poetic gifts from his mother, perished as the result of an imprudence before reaching the age of twenty.

post-haste to Italy. He went directly to Rome, where family affairs kept him until autumn; and after this spent about a year in Milan, where hardly anything is known of his mode of life, save that he became the friend of the celebrated theoretician Bonifazio Asioli. His stay in Milan must have lasted until the end of the summer of 1808, at which time he returned to Vienna where, among many others, the hospitable *salons* of Mme. de Poutot and Mme. de Ertmann, the admired pupil of Beethoven, were once more open to him; and where he was always welcomed and petted as being the most amiable and ingenious man "known to his age, so full is he of concentrated vitality and wit." Yet his fingers never touch the keys and this obstinate silence remains an unsolved mystery.

Haydn's life flickered out in the spring of 1809. Clementi's absence at his funeral would seem to indicate that the Roman master was not living in Vienna at the time; for it is certain that he neither could nor would have refused to render this last tribute of respect to the grand old man whom he had never ceased to venerate. Yet a letter addressed to his London friend, the publisher Collard, proves that he was still in Vienna in September, 1809; and it is not until the summer of 1810, eight years after his departure, that Clementi once more lands on the English coast.

IV

Herewith a new period begins in the agitated life of Muzio Clementi. It might have been supposed that his second marriage with Miss Emma Gisborne, an Englishwoman, on July 6, 1811, would have kept him definitely in his newly adopted country. Nothing of the sort: for more than ten further years, during a period which lasted from the end of 1816 to 1827, he gave himself up to extended journeys, during whose progress his family was often deprived of all news regarding him. Yet while he remained in London, or in its vicinity, his existence was regularly apportioned among the normal occupations of the father of a family, the land-owner, and the noblest and most active artistic production. It really seems as though Clementi, when past sixty, had retained the strength and health of a young man. His art grows greater, adapts itself to all the "modern" conquests, takes advantage of all their resources; and at the same time preserves a balance, an equilibrium which often impresses us as though he had known how to level, moderate and, perhaps, dominate the most audacious inventions of the new romantic idiom.

Like Clementi's first wife, Miss Emma Gisborne was the product of an artistic and literary environment; and if, unlike poor Caroline Lehmann, she was not honored by a Chamisso sonnet, yet the poet Shelley addressed one of his finest "letters" to Clementi's sister-in-law, Maria Gisborne. One of the Gisborne sisters had become the wife of the famous aquarellist Fielding, and other ties connecting them with distinguished English artists and painters might be found without difficulty. Yet the indications instanced suffice to show us in what manner of artistic and intellectual circles Clementi sought the companions whom he considered worthy of sharing his life, circles which he was in the habit of frequenting quite aside from any matrimonial business.

Four children were born to Clementi of this second marriage: two sons and two daughters. Vincent, the eldest, born in 1812, died in Canada in 1902.¹ He had devoted himself to the Church, and had taken orders in Trinity College, Cambridge. John, the second son, an ardent sportsman, died young, toward 1860, after having lost his wife and son. Of the two daughters one, Cecilia, married the Rev. John Smith and was the mother of twelve children; while the family of the second, wedded to a Mr. Canham, was no less numerous. Only descendents of the two daughters are living at present; the grand-children of Cecilia Clementi call themselves Clementi-Smith, and nearly all of them have chosen the ecclesiastical vocation. One of them has founded a Royal College of Music prize, the Muzio Clementi Prize, as a recompense for the student chosen to play a piano composition by the Roman master at a pupils' concert.

Two years after his marriage, in 1813, an event of importance, one destined to infuse with new vitality the musical life of London, had its share in powerfully stimulating Clementi's artistic productivity: the event in question was the foundation of the famous Philharmonic Society, by which so many works were to be given their first performances, among them the Beethoven Choral Symphony. Clementi was at once appointed its conductor, a post which he retained until 1818. And now, in contact with these excellent instrumentalists, he reveals himself greater, more ardent than ever, the dream of his whole existence is to be accounted one of the greatest symphonists. And we behold the birth of a series of works of which, alas, only a solitary survivor at present remains, one which, however, suffices to indicate to us what must have been, in the admirable plentitude of its power and grandeur, that art

¹Peterborough, Ontario.

which so magnificently flings wide the portals of the nineteenth century! Beethoven did not hesitate to give Rossini his hand; and one might say that before any romantic symphony was, the aged Clementi at times already allows us very clearly to vision Richard Wagner.¹

Beginning with the first concert given by the new society, on March 8, 1813, Clementi, following the ancient custom, conducted at the clavicin, while Salomon was established at the first violinist's stand. A Symphony by Clementi figures in the fourth and seventh concerts, which the *Morning Chronicle* describes in the following terms:

The second part (of the concert) opened with a Symphony by Clementi, who conducted the performance of it himself. It was received with the most rapturous and unqualified approbation, and though it was introduced amid a blaze of excellence in a concert which performs in the most perfect manner the greatest works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven; yet it lost nothing by comparison and shone conspicuously, though thus surrounded by the most admirable productions of musical genius.

And when this same Symphony was repeated at the seventh concert, the enthusiasm was in no wise abated.

Toward the end of 1814, Clementi received the diploma of Member of the Stockholm Academy, in which he succeeded Grétry: a distinction which appears to have flattered him greatly, since he does not fail to inscribe his new title on his last piano compositions. In 1814 and 1815, probably given over to the study of some vast project, he stands aside and has no compositions performed. But on April 29, 1816, a new Symphony by Clementi, "composed for the Society," is performed, and the master is at the piano in order to conduct it in the established manner. This new musical manifestation proves that the project conceived in the course of the two years preceding had not remained a dead letter, and that once again Clementi had realized the plans which he had elaborated.

In December, 1816, he sets forth on his travels again, provided with all the music which makes up the first volume of his masterwork, the "Gradus ad Parnassum." This work is in some sort Clementi's musical will and testament: in the guise of a collection of études it is the immense melting-pot in which all the inspirations fermenting in his mind and thought are amalgamated. It is there that the fusion of the old and new takes place; and I cannot refrain, when reading these astonishing pages, from regarding with an admiration not unmixed with a certain terror this abstract of

¹Examine in this connection the "Scena Patetica," which serves as the slow movement of the admirable Suite in F, in the second volume of the "Gradus ad Parnassum."

the ages, in which one may view Johann Sebastian Bach walking side by side with Richard Wagner.

Clementi, as we said, again left England toward the end of 1816: it was his intention to have the first volume of his "Gradus" appear simultaneously in three cities: Paris, London and Leipsic, on the self-same day, March 1, 1817. He secured for his patroness a great lady of the Russian aristocracy, the Princess Wolkonsky, a friend of the arts. On leaving for France it was also his intention to let the Parisian public hear his latest symphonic compositions, which on December 25th are listed in the announcements of the *Théâtre Royal Italien*: they are a Symphony (probably the one played in London in April, 1816) and an Overture. Yet a double disappointment resulted. The public, when the announcement was made, believed that it was going to hear Clementi, "whose glory it is to have been the first to write good music for the piano." And it is true that the venerable Italian master was in evidence. He contented himself, however, according to his custom, with conducting his work at the piano: he struck the opening chords, and then the orchestra was unchained and all that was to be seen was a man penetrated with attention, sitting at a keyboard . . . he was not *heard*! And besides, what an orchestra! When, on April 6, 1817, two further symphonies by Clementi are played at the *Théâtre Italien* (only the first bears the inscription "newly composed," which would seem to indicate that the second was the Symphony performed at the preceding concert on December 25th), the critics and public were impressed by one fact only—the terrible difficulties of the execution. The *Journal de Paris*, describing the work played for the second time in Paris, explains that it is written in four "long movements," and that the audience would have preferred hearing a symphony by Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven. Nevertheless a great impression was produced. Sievers, in a very biting article in the Leipsic *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, gives an account of these symphonies, whose fame was noised far beyond the French borders. The journalist speaks of these two symphonies as being very noisy, with numerous trumpets and basses, flutes and kettledrums, violins and oboes, violas and clarinets; says that they are replete with details and show much genius, but are marked by but little unity, and betray a lack of clearness. Neither Mozart nor Haydn wrote in this manner. "For some time past Clementi has made up his mind that he would be able to fuse the styles of these two men and realize this union in his own person; yet the god of all musicians himself would not have been able to succeed in such an attempt."

This opinion agrees with that which Auber several times formulated before Marmontel and other experts.¹

A response to this article was forthcoming at short notice. It emanated, according to an editorial note in the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, from a "master worthy of esteem," who has remained anonymous, and who is supposed to have been August Alexander Klengel, one of Clementi's best pupils. He refutes "with the most legitimate indignation the criticism which the Paris correspondent of one of our German journals, too numerous, alas! has echoed on the occasion of the *Concert Spirituel* (December 25, 1816) at which the two unpublished symphonies by Clementi were performed. It has been known for the last ten or twelve years that Clementi has devoted his time and his profound artistic knowledge to writing a suite of Six Grand Symphonies—a species of composition which he regards as the summit of the new instrumental music. He has not as yet published them, since he does not cease improving and correcting them, etc."

Then his pupil rebels against the ignoramuses who dismiss with a word the tremendous creations of the human mind, while true judges, such as a Viotti, a Cramer or a Dragonetti are unanimous in their opinion, and rank Clementi's symphonic compositions among the finest written after those of Haydn or Mozart. What are we to deduce from all this, if not that the appearance of these major orchestral compositions by Clementi caused a great and profound movement of opinion throughout the musical world?

Toward the middle of the summer of 1817 Clementi left Paris and went to Germany. On November 14th he assisted at a concert given by Hummel in Frankfurt, and on April 12th following (1818) he is still in that city. Were it not for the fact that some interesting letters addressed to the publisher Breitkopf afford particulars anent this period, it would be practically impossible to gather an idea of Clementi's life and occupations during these long months of absence. Fortunately, thanks to one of the letters, we know that seven or eight months before, in Paris, the master had received two copies of the first volume of his "*Gradus ad Parnassum*," whose revision he had entrusted to the pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner and a certain George. And when this work is completed, Clementi at once communicates the fact to his correspondent; the letter ending with complaints expressed with regard to a recent plagiarism committed by his pupil Cramer: it is a question of the theme of an *Adagio* from one of the four-hand

¹Marmontel: *Les Pianistes célèbres*.

sonatas in Op. 14. This composition, reduced for piano solo, figures in the first volume of the "Gradus ad Parnassum" and is inscribed: "Arranged after my duos published in London in 1784." We are almost tempted to thank Cramer, the pupil, for his plagiarism, since its commission brought forth from Clementi a reply which displays the measure of his intelligence, his discretion and his tact.

It was not until the end of 1816 that he returned to England, after a short stop in Brussels. He had acquired the certitude that the new English pianos were but little appreciated in Germany, and had begun to realize that his compositions were very much more successful than his instruments. In 1819 Clementi prepared and chose the pieces (already in existence) which were to form the second volume of the "Gradus," and at the beginning of January a Grand Symphony composed by him figures in a programme of the Philharmonic Society, framed in two symphonies by Beethoven. On March 1st we have a New Symphony by Clementi, conducted by the composer, and "conceived on the classic plan." It bristles with "melodic and harmonic effects," declares the *Morning Chronicle*, and scored the liveliest success. It is even probable that it was the analysis of this Symphony, brought out by the London publishing house, which was sent to the publishers Breitkopf & Härtel during the summer of 1819. The detailed description of the symphony leads us to believe that the first movement has been preserved and may be found among the Clementi sketches in the British Museum, a fact to which we have already alluded. The autograph reads: "Symphony No. 4 for Grand Orchestra, by Muzio Clementi."¹ It includes forty-two pages of score, and it is needless for us to emphasize the importance of this composition, the only witness remaining to us of the grand instrumental art cultivated by Clementi toward the end of his long career.

In 1820, he contents himself with publishing his piano variations on the air "Batti, batti," from "Don Giovanni," and the Sonata, Op. 46, dedicated to Friedrich Kalkbrenner. He no longer appears in public and, toward the end of the year, in a letter addressed from Paris to his correspondent in Leipsic on December 13th, he sets the date of February 1, 1821, for the publication of his two marvelous "Capricci," Op. 47, which he has dedicated to his wife. The same letter also mentions the Fantasy on the air "Au clair de la lune," Op. 48, inscribed to Maréchale Moreau.

¹British Museum, Add. No. 29, 821.

Clementi's correspondence with various music-publishers, however, extended to nearly all the great cities of the Continent. It was still in December, 1820, that he wrote his friend Naderman, a music-publisher and manufacturer of Parisian harps, to offer him some of the works already mentioned; and we know that one of the latter's daughters possessed a copy of the "Gradus," with the fingering indicated by the composer himself. The productive activity of this man, now well-nigh a septuagenarian, knew no abatement. On April 2, 1821, he informed Breitkopf & Härtel that he was putting the finishing touches to a new Symphony "which pleases him infinitely more than its predecessors, and which he hopes to be able to hear played very shortly in Paris." It seems, however, as though the project was one incapable of entire realization: the Symphony was, in all probability, not played in Paris; yet the composer again repaired to that city at the beginning of August, not without, before his departure, having negotiated for the publication of two other important works: the twelve charming "Monferrines" (Piedmontese Dances), Op. 49, and the last series of Grand Sonatas for the piano, Op. 50; which he probably intended to dedicate to Cherubini during this identical sojourn in Paris. Clementi then returned to Germany in order to have his last Grand Symphonies performed in that country. We find him in Munich on November 19th, on which date the orchestra of the theater played one of his new symphonies, and on December 7th he wrote Härtel that despite defective rehearsals the work gave much pleasure. Yet this did not suffice him: he must hear his great orchestral creations performed by the first symphonic phalanx of Germany. Hence he goes to Leipsic, where he arrives on January 15, 1822. As early as October 29, 1801, the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra of that city had played a Clementi Symphony, one of the first two that he wrote, it is said. I am more inclined to believe that it was one of those written by the master toward 1790 or 1795. The fact remains that Clementi brought with him three new symphonies in manuscript; the first, conducted by the master himself, was performed on January 24, 1822, and the second and third opened the concerts of February 14th, and March 14th. The critics record the very flattering reception given them and express the hope of hearing other instrumental works by the celebrated master. The musical importance of these performances is still further stressed by Dörffel, in his "History of the Gewandhaus Concerts": he reports his discovery of a notice giving the initial themes of these three Clementi symphonies (in B flat, D and C major), and the last-mentioned,

which begins in C minor, is nothing less than the transposition of the Symphony in D whose first movement, preserved in the British Museum, has already attracted our attention.¹ It dates from 1819.

This old and precious "Notice" has unfortunately gone astray; but another testimony constituting an even more valuable souvenir was formerly in the possession of the Rev. H. Clementi-Smith, in London. This was a cup of Meissen porcelain presented by the management of the Concerts to "Muzio Clementi, *aetatis suae Orphee*," upon which, inscribed on scrolls decorating the saucer, were to be seen the themes of the two symphonies aforementioned, in C minor and in B flat major. This souvenir, together with other relics of Clementi, unfortunately passed into hands unknown, after the death of the Rev. H. Clementi-Smith. Does it not seem strange to see Clementi celebrate the triumph of Haydn, at the moment of his departure from London, by presenting him with a "gobelet of cocoanut wood," which is returned to him some twenty years later, to celebrate his own symphonic triumphs, in the form of a handsome cup of Saxony porcelain?

In spite of pressing invitations coming from Berlin, the old master, suffering from a rheumatic affection, did not care to revisit the city where so cruel a misfortune had once overtaken him, and returned to England in the month of November, 1822.

With really magnificent ardor and energy he set to work again, and a New Symphony (MS.) was announced by the Philharmonic Society for April 21, 1823. The programme, a decidedly lengthy one, included Mozart's G minor Symphony, an Overture in D major by A. Romberg; a Spohr Concerto and a new Beethoven Overture, which surely must be that entitled "Zur Weihe des Hauses." The Beethoven Overture as well as the Clementi Symphony called forth very generous eulogiums from the critics, who confined themselves to admiring the perennially youthful talent of the master, whose vigor persisted in spite of age. The *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* and, above all, the *Zeitschrift für Theater, Musik und die bildenden Künste*, declared that the Symphony was a veritably prodigious work, entirely filled with original and daring thoughts and new and magnificent effects; the enthusiastic reception accorded it rewarded the veteran who had himself conducted it with youthful fire, making manifest to one and all that the power of genius and the flame of inspiration could declare themselves at no matter what stage of advanced age.

¹Max Unger, *Op. cit.*, p. 227 et al.

It was in 1824 that the last manifestations of Clementi's symphonic art were produced. It was at a séance given on March 5th, by the Concerts of Ancient and Modern Sacred Music, and under the direction of Rossini, at the beginning of the second part of the programme, a Grand Symphony by the Roman master, which must have been one of those written during the years preceding, the orchestra and chorus including 120 artists, was performed. Nor was this all: on the 22nd of the same month the Philharmonic Society presented a New Overture, whose "pleasantness," spirit and daring were admired by the critics, the latter also affirming its genuine success. At the farewell concert of Ferdinand Ries, on April 8th, Clementi himself conducted an Overture which "seemed to be admirable," to quote a journalist; and a few days before, on March 26th, the Concerts of Ancient and Modern Sacred Music, which in London may be said to have represented the equivalent of the Paris *Concerts Spirituels*, gave, probably for the second time, and by request of the auditors, Clementi's last major work. This was an important composition, in which the British national hymn appeared in all its splendor, adorned with the richest harmonies and affording an excuse for all sorts of contrapuntal devices, in the middle of a serene and grandiose *Adagio*. After a *Menuet* full of fire and animation, the motives of the *Adagio*—on which the brilliant *Finale* was built up—were once more heard. The entire work had a character of harmonious and imposing grandeur.¹

And thus the final cycle of the productive activity of our hero comes to an end. What a pity and what a matter of regret for us it is that we are unable to follow, by an examination of these works of his astonishing old age, the artistic vision which he lived and expressed practically up to his last day! We may gain an idea, nevertheless, if we turn the pages of the third and last volume of the "*Gradus ad Parnassum*"²—in which, probably, as before, he had reduced for the piano keyboard many a symphonic fragment—the high degree of nobility and beauty which his art had attained.

Did Clementi have any inkling of the future glory awaiting a child of thirteen, Franz Liszt? The fact is that on June 21, 1824, a circle of artists surrounded the young virtuoso, who was giving his first concert on an Erard piano, playing a Hummel Concerto under the eyes of the old master. The boy scored a marked

¹*Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, VI.

²The "*Gradus*" had been completed in the summer of 1825.

success with the artists; it is not likely, however, that he had ever heard the veteran Clementi himself play, for the latter never played for anyone. A young French pianist, Camille Petit, notwithstanding, managed to hear him in London, in 1822. The fact that he was a pupil of Clementi gave him access to the latter's home. No sooner had he entered the antechamber than he heard the echo of the famous piano. Moving with noiseless steps he passed through several doors which separated him from the room in which the great man was practicing. When he arrived at the last, he held his breath and stood motionless. His daily exercises concluded, Clementi attacked the "Prelude and Fugue in F sharp minor" by Händel. The immobility of the indiscreet young auditor was now no longer that of curiosity but of admiration; for what he heard was the attainment of perfection. He did not move . . . until Clementi opened the door and seemed to be anything but pleased, to tell the truth, at the young man's unexpected presence. He pardoned him, however, and Camille Petit took his departure, doubly content, since he had not incurred the master's odium and—a privilege well-nigh unique—he had heard him play!

The old master's love of change did not permit him to enjoy in peace his very comfortable circumstances and an agreeable estate situated on the outskirts of London. Impelled by his old love of adventure, he disappeared one fine day toward the end of 1825, and spent nearly two years travelling through France, his native Italian homeland, which he wished to see for the last time, and Austria. No details regarding his peregrinations are extant; only a few letters addressed to Artaria in Vienna date from this period. It has been established, however, that in 1827 he was in Baden, near Vienna, a summering place famed because Mozart and Beethoven were wont to go there. The latter had died only two months before Clementi arrived in Baden to undergo a thermal cure. Schindler, Beethoven's confidant and biographer, apprized of Clementi's presence, at once went to Baden and discussed with him the great master who had just passed away. He also talked with him about Beethoven's works and those of Clementi himself, who furnished him with directions for the interpretation of his Sonatas in F sharp and in B minor, as well as for the famous descriptive Sonata entitled "Didone abbandonata." A copy of this work belonging to Schindler shows annotations of various kinds in Clementi's own handwriting. The two men talked at length; but their conversations, unfortunately, have not been preserved. Schindler contents himself with mentioning

Clementi's opinion regarding Beethoven's playing at the piano. "His playing," said Clementi, "was but little exercised, and often brusque, like Beethoven himself; yet nevertheless it was always full of soul."

Not long after the arrival of the old master at Baden, his wife, worried at not hearing from him, came there to join him and, after some weeks spent in Vienna, they returned to England, where a reception was prepared for the old man which partook of the nature of an apotheosis. He was, in fact, invited by all the artistic notabilities of the English capital to a great banquet given on December 17, 1827, at the Hotel Albion in London: there choral chants and toasts resounded in his honor, "and it is easier to imagine than describe the sentiments which filled Clementi," says a biographer. Cramer and Moscheles played his magnificent Sonata in E flat, Op. 14, for piano four hands, and a number of other vocal and instrumental works were played by celebrated artists, but all were silent when—accompanied by Cramer and Moscheles—the patriarch was seen to approach the instrument. At last they could hear him play! And in a flash he flung the burden of age aside; he improvised on a motive from Händel's First Organ Concerto with the fire and brilliance of youth, his eyes sparkled and the rafters rang to the thunders of applause which rose when he concluded and regained his seat.

This, however, was not his final appearance in public: in 1828 he was once more seen at a concert of the Philharmonic Society, and at a gathering held in the same year, he played before a young woman already famous, Henriette Sontag, and an old man more famous still, Sir Walter Scott. His last years were spent peacefully on his estate, Elm Lodge at Evesham (Worcester), where he took pleasure in receiving his friends. His wit, his clear intelligence, had not diminished and, justified as we are in admiring his art, it is quite as legitimate to admire the splendid physical constitution of this remarkable man. His end appears to have come suddenly, and we prefer the account given by an old serving-woman, who was still living in 1908, and who had been an eye-witness of the old master's end, to the official versions. The following is the account of Miss Myra Taylor:

I think that I am in a position to tell you that it was really at the Elm that Clementi died. I remember that in course of conversation with an old laundress, Mary Westwood, employed by us, I found that she was living at the Elm in 1832, so I questioned her about Clementi. Her reply was that she could not remember the name, but quite well remembered an old "Italian" suddenly dropping down dead in the laun-

dry there and that the body was afterward taken to London. From what she said I gathered that he was staying at the house as a visitor, so I do not think that he rented it himself.¹

The "old Italian" died several hours afterward, in the night of March 9-10, 1832, and this humble serving-woman recalled with exactness that his body "was afterward taken to London." The English, in fact, proud of their adopted son, deposited his remains in the cloisters of that famous shrine, Westminster Abbey.

A certain quality of mystery surrounds various circumstances of Clementi's life; there is no documentary evidence as to the date of his birth; there is no information concerning his obscure stay in Berne, after Mlle. Imbert-Colomès had been taken from him in 1783 or 1784; there is no explanation of the disappearance of the great symphonic works of the close of his career. In the same way, one might say, the impressions disengaged from certain great pages of his compositions frequently offer the critic a psychological meaning which is decidedly difficult to define. This is something which occurs in the case of various works of the great creative artists, especially the romanticists; and the striking "romanticism" which manifests itself in Clementi, beginning with his Op. 5 (Paris, 1780), is, perhaps, one of the reasons for the really astonishing lack of comprehension shown in current judgments anent his work. When professional musicians place in the hands of young girls of family these sonatas which, to the professional eye are "cold, correct and distinguished," while several among them are alive with troubled passion, are strongly "romantic," the competence of judgment of the professional may be estimated by the fact. The persistence of this current opinion regarding Clementi's works is, to tell the truth, one of the most astonishing things in the history of music. It is not rare, on the other hand, to find among the public far more intelligent appreciations—notably that which treats Clementi as a "disturber of music."

The great "trouble moral" which the nineteenth century introduced in music already makes itself manifest in several of Clementi's earlier works: his scholarly virtuosity engenders an art which, bearing the stamp of Bach, is often near akin to Beethoven in its expression, in the quality of its ideas, as well as the spontaneity of its modulations, and which, toward the end of his life, on occasion will be found to have clearly apparent affinities to Richard Wagner. An astonishing lucidity, altogether Latin, clarifies these Germanic tendencies, and from all this re-

¹Max Unger. *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

sults that indefinable something, that quality of quasi-inquietude, that "unsatisfied" feeling, a quality which, at times, may become one of major greatness. What is generally said of Clementi? That he had a very cultivated nature, and also a very active and happy one. This is true, yet at the same time quite insufficient. Clementi, as I see him, was above all a *grand esprit*, he had a *great mind!*—and I might add that he belongs in the rare category of those who impress us with the clear conviction that they have known how to scale the heights.

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens)

CONSTRUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCES IN MUSIC

By ERIC BLOM

THE innumerable currents of influence that go to the development, the completion, and the deterioration of any particular form of art, are so complex and so dependent upon a variety of side-issues branching off from the main subject, that it is exceedingly difficult to discern the paternity and the progeny of any given movement, and well-nigh impossible to reconstruct a genealogy of the art as a whole. Yet something resembling the genealogical tree, used to represent the ramifications of a family, will equally appropriately symbolize the growth of any form of art, and certainly that of the art of music. In the evolution of an artistic movement, there is a stem from which branches grow in all directions, and from the branches again smaller sprigs shoot up here and there, which bear a cluster of leaves and sometimes a blossom that gradually turns into fruit. The fruit, apparently, is the ultimate end, and it is therefore generally looked upon as the only thing that matters; but it is the tree that matters, in reality, and the fruit only comes into being so that other trees may in turn spring up from it.

Thus with music. The fruit, for all its splendour, is not the most important thing. The achievement of a master, glorious though it be, leads nowhere. It may perhaps, very much later, engender something useful, but that happens very rarely. How many apples are destined to become apple-trees? The vast majority are eaten and enjoyed; they nourish, they render life more agreeable; that is all. But the tree lives, it remains full of beauty and interest and goes on developing new features. Exactly the same applies to the evolution of music. The great masters who give us the flowers and the fruit, do nothing more; they have no influence whatever on the shape of the tree, and but for the new sprigs that shoot off from the main branches here and there, where would be flower and fruit? Thus the great masters could not have developed, had it not been for the smaller men who immediately preceded them and smoothed their path.

But most of the great classics demonstrably not only lead to nothing; they actually have a negative, a destructive influence.

Another simile may for a moment be adopted to illustrate this. Music is like the sea, as eternal and as beautiful, and its ever-recurrent, yet ever-changing tendencies are nothing more than so many waves driving to shore and, having reached it, falling back and becoming absorbed in the great mass of water. The wave may be advancing very gently and spend itself without causing an upheaval, or it may rush magnificently onward, gathering strength on its way, and reach the shore, stirring the sands as it falls and moving them to a new position, from which they can never be restored to the old one again. But fall it must, and though it may reach a few inches farther inland, it will soon be lost in the waters that surge after it. And the more powerful the billow, the more rapid the backwash. Another wave may follow that looks as promising as the one that has just spent itself, but it will collapse too soon, prevented from ever reaching land by the reflux of its predecessor which, because of its very power, has become an agent of destruction.

It may be found throughout the history of music that the great composer, for no other reason than because he *is* great, proves an evil influence, and that the really valuable services have been rendered to the progress of the art, not by the great classical masters, but by a certain number of men who, comparatively insignificant as regards their own work, did an incalculable amount of pioneer work and thus became, if not towering figures in musical history, constructive influences that are scarcely ever rated at their full value.

To the blind worshipper of actual achievement it sounds heretical to describe Beethoven, Wagner or Brahms as destructive influences; yet no other conclusion is logically possible. It does not detract from the merits of any master's work, judged in the abstract, for influence and achievement are diametrically opposed values, and it may be generally observed in the case of any great master, that the greater the latter, the more unwholesome the former.

Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner and Brahms are insuperable masters, but it is easy to see that their influence was in some isolated cases fruitless, in the others actually harmful. Bach is a transcendent master, and the fact that he proved merely fruitless and not harmful, is only to be explained by the fact that no other musician ventured to follow him, not even his own sons. He overtowered his contemporaries like a high mountain that can make a complete impression only from a certain distance. Bach was not really known, much less understood, until, about three-

quarters of a century later, Mendelssohn discovered him. Had he been imitated, there is no doubt that he would have made no exception to the rule, and would have been a formidable obstacle to the progress of music. It is true that Mendelssohn did try to imitate him, but his individuality lay in too different a direction and it was, whatever may be thought of it, too strong, to come completely under the sway of any other master. It was the fact that he was unsuccessful in his discipleship that saved him.

The case of Mozart is different and more difficult to fit in with the theory. He is part of a movement, a link in a chain. Taught by a methodical father and brought up in a *milieu* that hugged its conventions, he assimilated the vocabulary of the eighteenth century, and more particularly the stock-in-trade of Italian opera, which in his days reigned tyrannically everywhere. Quick to grasp the technical problems of his art and marvellously dexterous in turning them to account, he did not on occasion disdain to use the stalest of formulæ; but his extraordinary genius and his unerring natural taste nearly always guided him aright and made him invest all these *rococo* mannerisms with a grace, a tenderness and even a novelty, that stamp him forever as the most adroit, the most courtly, one might say, of the great masters. His genius is so irradiating and his personality so attractive that even his defects seem to become additional charms. For defects he had, the gravest being an utter absence of all feeling for nature; but that is typical of the whole of eighteenth-century art. It is curious that in spite of his incapacity for pictorial suggestion, Mozart should be the greatest operatic composer who ever lived, not excepting even Wagner; but he was so fundamentally musical that he could transmute any feeling and even any stage situation into sheer absolute music and make it perfectly convincing and thrillingly dramatic. Like Shakespeare, he can touch our emotions without superficial effects; he can move us to tears by a comic song or make us rapturously happy by a tragic one without any incongruity, and his greatness turns the apparent triviality of his medium into pure beauty.

Mozart went as he came, like a comet, and left no trace of any beneficial influence behind him. He had nothing to hand down to others, for his language was the common property of the day, while the matter wherewith he invested it was unapproachable. Every text-book has it that he influenced Beethoven, but that is an empty platitude. The Mozartian appearance of the early works of Beethoven, whose individuality moreover peeps out here and there from the very beginning, would have been

just the same if Mozart had never existed. Beethoven's first works are as much like Haydn, or Hummel, or Clementi, as they are like Mozart; we simply find the last remnants of eighteenth-century convention clinging to them, a few worn-out traditions such as no artist, however great, could escape, whose career begins in his early boyhood.

If Mozart had no influence at all, either good or bad, Beethoven, on the other hand, wielded the destructive power over German instrumental music that Wagner was later destined to wield over German opera. Both were giants who by the sheer weight of their genius realized all that their particular forms of art were capable of. The numerous composers who attempted to walk in their path, found that all the flowers had been gathered before them and that it led to nothing but an arid waste. The only two nineteenth-century German composers who opened up a few new well-springs, which have now in their turn run dry, are the relatively unimportant Mendelssohn and the often sublime, but unequal, Schumann. Schubert, like Mozart, was a radiant genius without a successor.

That Beethoven's influence was decidedly destructive, is clearly shown by the general decline of German music after him, a decline that is glaringly illustrated by the personality of Brahms, who, but for a strong individuality of his own, could never have reached greatness. The curious duality of character that makes him superb in one work and repellently dry and muddy, or flabbily sentimental in the next, is doubtless due to the conflicting influences he has undergone. It is preposterous to condemn the work of Brahms as a whole; he has written much that commands wholehearted admiration and a few works even that have our affection; but he has been the most pernicious influence on instrumental music—more particularly chamber music—and on song writing, not only in Germany, but in every musical country. He has been held up by every professor as the paragon whom to follow was to take the only road to salvation, and there has been and still is so much music written that is full of Brahms mannerisms without partaking of his genius, that one would willingly give all but a dozen of this composer's works if the sacrifice could undo the immeasurable harm he has done.

While Brahms was busy ruining absolute music, Wagner strove to lead opera to perfection and to perdition. He reached the summit of what can be achieved in his own province by logically carrying out the idea of the leading-motive, which he had by no means invented, but which was bequeathed to him by many

earlier composers, including Gluck and Weber. The interest had accumulated to a respectable fortune in the hands of the Bayreuth master, but after him it was distributed to so many smaller people that none of them found it an appreciable addition to their wealth. Even the chief heir, Strauss, uses it far more sparingly now, and his scores abound in pages of absolute music which are generally the best, although he still breathes some life into the Wagnerian principle now and then. If music were an art purely intellectual, the leading-motive would have been a lasting triumph; but it is primarily an art of feeling and of atmosphere. In opera, nothing matters but those two factors, for if we require intellect, the spoken drama is much more satisfactory. All that music should be concerned with is the feeling that actuates the characters, the things that can be suggested to us neither by words nor by the scenic action. Music that simply reminds us audibly of things of which we are already visually aware, is entirely superfluous. It must be confessed, however, that Wagner does convey feeling and atmosphere, only he does so not because of his system, but in spite of it. All the effects in his works that are essentially *musical* could have been gained as well by completely disregarding the system of the leading-motive. It was therefore a great mistake on the part of a host of other composers to grasp as eagerly as they did the Wagnerian principle, for though they applied the leading-motive as persistently and as logically as he, they utterly failed, simply because the music they built up on it was less good in some cases, and frankly bad in others. And so we once again behold the deplorable spectacle of a great man who had found a perfect medium for himself, spelling destruction for countless others.

But who, it will be asked, can have had any beneficial influence on the evolution of music, if all the great masters proved so deterrent? There are an enormous number of what the world would call second-rate composers, who have contributed, often very unobtrusively, to the amazing progress the youngest of all the arts has made in the course of a few centuries; but the currents of influence are so intricately linked together that it would be impossible to estimate the exact value of every man, or even to mention all the important names.

The greatest among the composers of wholesome influence, a truly prophetic figure, is Liszt, whose actual achievement is by no means of the first order, although it is still underrated. But Liszt's influence is not confined to his creative example. His continuous travels as pianist brought him into contact with musicians

in every country, and he never tired of looking at the works of new composers. Endowed with an amazing faculty of appreciating everything that was good, he appraised each work at its own value, without regard for precedent. He discovered everywhere the most original and enterprising musicians, who were generally misunderstood by critics and music lovers because they were ahead of their time, and were given no encouragement whatever by anyone else. Liszt saw, for instance, the wonderful individuality of the then young Russian nationalist composers, who were looked upon in those days as a band of enthusiastic but incompetent amateurs, and he was particularly interested in Borodin, whom nobody thought of taking seriously. He encouraged, at various periods of his long career, the national tendencies in Grieg, the Norwegian; in Smetana, the Czech; in Albeniz, the Spaniard; MacDowell, the American; Sgambati, the Italian, and César Franck, the father of the new French school. But it was not only by his encouragement of others, it was also by his own work that he led the way to new developments. It must not be forgotten that he invented the symphonic poem and entirely and for all time reformed the piano concerto by giving it a more independent form. But the greatest of all Liszt's achievements is his re-creation of the technique of piano playing. His works have too often been decried as mere keyboard pyrotechnics, and although it is quite true that many of them are of inferior musical value, only the ignorant could venture to condemn them as a whole and to deny that they contain, even the worst of them, innumerable wonderfully imaginative pages, the truly magic effect of which is always gained by means that go to the very root of the nature of the instrument. And it should be remembered that we find strewn all over his works the germs of countless technical devices and musical innovations which we are all apt to attribute to much more modern composers. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that Liszt, with the aid, it is true, of Chopin and Schumann, set in motion the whole movement of modern piano writing up to Debussy and Ravel. We have in him a minor composer who became the central figure of the nineteenth century as far as constructive influence is concerned.

But there have been comparatively small composers elsewhere, who can be cited in support of the theory that *they* often are the really vital forces, and it is curiously significant that they have sprung up in almost every musical country save the home of the great classics, Germany and Austria, which is singularly poor in such fructifying influences.

If we turn to France, we find the argument supported by a man who, next to Liszt, was greatest in this respect, a man of immense genius and imagination, who was prevented only by technical shortcomings and by the fact that he was born at least half a century too soon, from becoming one of the sublime figures in musical history. This man, needless to say, is Berlioz. His very defects, his far-fetched oddity and his overweening attempts to create works that were beyond his power, proved enormously stimulating to others. A no less vital French personality, hardly known at all, is Emmanuel Chabrier, who was even more wickedly ignored than Berlioz. Although in his continuous disappointment he wrote very little, his works are now seen to contain all the truly characteristic elements in the modern French school, and it is to Chabrier that we owe most of what is usually attributed to César Franck. The latter can no longer be denied the rank of a classic, and so he becomes but another example upholding the theory that the classics are fatal to the development of their disciples. Franck found an ideal medium for himself, but it turned to full maturity in his own hands and could therefore only decay on being handed down to his pupils. We find in his direct descendants, Chausson, Duparc, Ropartz, Lekeu and most of the modern Belgians, an over-ripeness, a languid flaccidity, the very attraction of which soon becomes wearisome. The qualities that we love in Franck become obnoxious in his imitators. The only pupil of his of any vital importance is Vincent d'Indy, but he is interesting chiefly because of his own individual qualities and not those inherited from his master. The same conditions apply to the older French classics; Rameau and Couperin are delicious, but again they lead nowhere. Many critics are very assiduous in trying to make us accept Debussy as one of the greatest and most complete masters who ever lived, but it is preferable to think of him as what he really was: a great and wholesome constructive force.

The development of Russian music took an entirely different course. Roughly up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russia was almost completely swayed, first by Italian and later by German music, and the man who is, rightly or wrongly, considered her greatest composer, Tchaikovsky, never escaped from the clutches of these foreign influences which, it can unfortunately not be denied, ensured his success. But a country so largely uncultured and yet so fundamentally musical, naturally possessed an inexhaustible treasure of folk-song, which was bound sooner or later to assert itself in its art-music. Thus a profoundly national

school arose, heralded by Glinka and Dargomijsky, who are neither of them great composers and still retain a good deal of the insipid conventions of their time, but who pointed the way to a rational use of the folk-song. They were in due course succeeded by two of the finest composers who ever lived: Moussorgsky and Borodin. Had they been professional musicians instead of pursuing the occupations of government official and professor of chemistry, perhaps they might have acquired that complete mastery which they both lacked; yet their defects are precisely their most attractive qualities, but for which both might have prematurely reached the summit of their movement and barred the way to many other interesting personalities who were to follow them. Moussorgsky's operas completely overthrow Wagner's system and show what extraordinarily dramatic and deeply human music can be written if Wagnerian verbosity be replaced by a strict limitation to the barest essentials and by setting down music as it flows from the heart instead of building it up laboriously from so many bricks that have been carefully trimmed beforehand. We cannot help feeling, on listening to "Boris Godounov," that *this*, after all, is the way to write an opera. In the libretto of "Boris," for example, the dramatically important coronation scene is sketched in a few words, nothing more than a mere framework that could not stand upright without the music. "Boris," therefore, is *essentially an opera* and nothing but an opera, whereas Wagner's dramas, with their logical development, their explanatory dialogues and soliloquies, their diffuseness that takes care to reveal by means of the text all that the characters do and feel, would be by no means elliptical without music. But a work that can dispense with music is not opera, or if, as in the case of Wagner, the music is too glorious to be sacrificed, all that is best in it can stand alone without the drama. Turning to Borodin, we find in him not only a perfect adaptation of the Russian national idiom, but an endless succession of innovations which were only much later adopted by "modern" composers; the latter too often took the credit for what they had only borrowed from the Russian master, who in his time was completely misunderstood and looked upon as a raw amateur whose "hideous discords" proved that he did not know the laws of harmony. Borodin's songs are full of things that remind one of Debussy, things which were not immediately accepted even in the later days of the French composer. Another splendid figure in Russian music is Balakirev, who influenced the whole of the nationalist school and even at one time nearly succeeded in winning over Tchaikovsky to his camp.

Tchaikovsky's second Symphony, which is never performed nowadays, is, for that composer, unusually Russian in character, not only in the choice of the themes, but in their treatment, which is the only thing that matters, for the mere selection of a Russian tune does not necessarily make Russian music. Tchaikovsky later often introduced Russian folk-songs and dances into his works, but presented them in an amiable Italian or dull German manner, instead of preserving their rugged, elemental character. The greatest pupil of Balakirev was Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom the Russian idiom reached its perfection and consequently, according to the rule we see repeated everywhere, its decadence. Rimsky-Korsakov's music often assumes a certain smoothness, a lyrical insipidity that tells of over-ripeness. Still, his operas are delightful, especially those based on some Russian fairy-tale or legend, and he wrote many gorgeous pages in his marvellously orchestrated symphonic poems. Of the last of the nationalists, Stravinsky, it is difficult to speak at present, for after his wonderful ballets, which sum up all the best tendencies of this school, he is now launching into experiments in a new direction which ought to be accepted for what they are worth until they have matured into a significant work. Judging by the extraordinary surety of touch that informs everything Stravinsky does, one feels certain that he will soon find himself at home on the new ground he explores; in the meantime, it is wisest to reserve one's judgment instead of either sharing the blind enthusiasm of his worshippers for all the little new works that he writes or condemning them at once as "imbecilities." It is precisely because Stravinsky continues to experiment that he will remain one of the great constructive forces in music. The Russian eclectic school, with Rachmaninov who follows in the wake of Tchaikovsky, and Medtner who pursues the Beethoven-Brahms direction, to say nothing of the academic Taneiev and others, does not promise any future, because such parasite plants can have no independent existence. Nor does Scriabin, for all his great individuality, wear at all well. His idiom, alarming as it sounds at first, becomes distinctly trite when once the ear is attuned to it. The morbid eroticism underlying it soon grows wearisome, and one begins to see through it the skeleton of a system that is in its way as dry as any other, for any harmonic basis, however strange in itself, grows into a dull and artificial mannerism of intolerable monotony if it is used arbitrarily and exclusively.

Italy, the alleged musical country *par excellence*, is singularly poor in composers who led the way to new things, because she

always rather slavishly followed tradition; but there are a few exceptional personalities. After a splendid era of madrigal and church music there came, in the second half of the sixteenth century, Claudio Monteverdi, an amazingly "advanced" genius, who created the modern opera and introduced harmony as a separate musical factor apart from its earlier accidental existence in polyphonic writing, which culminated in Palestrina—yet another great master who formed the summit of a great movement beyond which it could not be carried. Later, in the eighteenth century, there was Domenico Scarlatti, one of the most original composers of all time. After the eighteenth century, Italian music entered upon a gradual decline, which at the beginning of the present century had reached its lowest level. Italy had no longer any chamber music, no orchestral works, no great songs; the public worshipped at the shrine of a factitious, superficial opera. It idolized Verdi, which is pardonable, Puccini, which is perhaps understandable, and Leoncavallo, Mascagni and the rest of them, which is criminal. Only now there are a few men in Italy who, with Ildebrando Pizzetti at their head, work sincerely and eagerly at the liberation of their national music from the ignominious thralldom of the stage.

The conditions in Spain were much the same, only that the Iberian peninsula, in default of a great tradition of the past, possesses a much finer stock of folk-music than Italy, which has been explored very successfully by Pedrell, Albeniz, Granados, Manuel de Falla and others.

The history of England differs little from that of Italy. Like the latter, we had a brief spell of glory. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries England outrivalled every other nation by a school of madrigal and harpsichord music the like of which the world has never seen. She was rich, not in great classics, but in men of genius who established new and daring tendencies. In the works of Byrd, Weelkes, Morley, Gibbons, Farnaby, Croft, Blow and others, we find many things that sound modern even now. The movement came to a head in Purcell, whose greatness seems to descend in a direct line to Bach, and the current of great music then passed definitely into Germany. The decline in England came earlier than it did in Italy, and in fact it began through Italy, for this country came entirely under the sway of Italian opera and its taste and individuality deteriorated with it. Then came, in the guise of a saviour, a formidable destructive force that was to deal the death-blow to English music, in the person of Handel. England no doubt instinctively felt the danger

of Italian flightiness and fled unhesitatingly into the suffocating arms of German stolidity. Handel became the idol of the country, most likely because it was thought that he counteracted Italianism by writing English music, whereas in reality he simply wrote German music to English words. Safely rescued from the Italian Scylla, Britain fell into the clutches of the German Charybdis, whence for two centuries she was unable to escape. Handel reigned supreme; he was imitated by every feeble organist who wrote new services and anthems for his church, and the bombastic inanities of the religious and the patriotic oratorio flourished. No sooner was there a promise of the Handel cult dying out at last, another accomplished master came from Germany to establish his still more destructive sovereignty—Mendelssohn. Now everybody, surfeited by Handel's solid food, began to thirst for the younger master's mellifluous syrups. Composers sprang up by the hundred and adopted his tricks, which they poured forth with alarming facility. Streams of barcarolles, cradle-songs and insipidly amorous duets poured forth, and it is far from certain that the curse of our modern concert-life, the royalty ballad, is not an illegitimate offspring of Mendelssohn's. England was no longer interested even in the great German masters. Bach was ignored, Mozart underrated, Schubert despised. Yet these two ruinous agencies were not enough to make the country realize the yoke she bore, and it needed a third tyrant to come and exercise his autocracy before she at last revolted. This third usurper was Brahms; but great as his influence was, he nevertheless created a healthy reaction in certain quarters, and the regeneration now came with amazing rapidity. England discovered that she had some great old composers of her own and, what was perhaps still more wholesome, that she had an inexhaustible store-house of folk-songs with an extraordinary variety of wonderful traditional music in different parts of the country. If Italy, in spite of the fact that her *débâcle* had never been quite so disastrous, has been much slower in finding her feet, or rather her ears, again, this is no doubt attributable to the poverty of the folk-music in that "musical" nation as compared with the richness of that in "unmusical" Britain. There are a host of interesting composers in this country now, and it is only because they are actually in our midst and because we still endeavour to live up to our bad musical reputation, that we do not yet quite realize their significance.

There are a few other composers of great individuality and constructive power dotted here and there over Europe, among the

most interesting being Sibelius in Finland and Béla Bartók in Hungary.

Of Germany, little remains to be said beyond pointing out once more how singularly she provides an argument in support of the theory that no great master ever had a beneficial influence on younger generations. It would be absurd to deny the fact that no country has produced a greater number of fully developed masters than Germany—including, of course, Austria—but it is obvious that for that very reason she has failed to give birth to any composers who have engendered new and progressive ideas in others. The great ones were always blindly followed by their disciples, who simply took the direction in which the master had walked up the pyramid, failing to notice that from the apex which he had reached before them, the path could only lead downwards. The two or three modern German composers who count in the world's music, have not led anywhere. Strauss has deteriorated, and it was at any time only the influence of Liszt and Berlioz that saved him from being altogether engulfed by Wagnerian principles. Mahler, splendid as he is here and there, stands quite alone. Max Reger spent his life in trying to hide under a welter of modern chromaticisms the fundamentally old-fashioned forms and harmonies of his works; and even Schönberg and Schreker are by no means as new as the startling dress in which they present their ideas would make us believe, although the former has now freed himself from almost all the influences that cramped his early works.

Whatever country, whatever period we turn to, we find that musical history presents an endless chain of evolutionary movements culminating in a great master or a group of masters. Each of these movements is like a branch of the genealogical tree, and the master's achievement is the fruit it bears. Let us rejoice in the fruit and taste of it often, but let us not forget to bestow now and again an appreciative glance upon the life-giving beauty of the tree itself.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF A UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC TO THE STATE AND UNIVERSITY

By FREDERIC B. STIVEN

EVERY thoughtful student of humanity to-day recognizes that one of the great influences of civilization is music. He is indeed a man with a small vision, who belittles the importance of this art in the progress of the world. There is nothing that so binds together the hearts of men, that so draws them into a "fraternity of common need," that so consoles the broken-hearted or gives expression to the joyous enthusiasm of life, as music.

The history of mankind is the history of music. The hieroglyphic inscriptions of ancient Egypt and Assyria give proof that music was an important social agent of that early period; the Hebrew nation sang the Psalms of David, and gave praise to their Jehovah "upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery"; the early church depended largely on music for its inspiration and consolation; "Luther's battle was half won when the people began to sing the hymns of the Reformation"; the patriotism of the French was inspired to deeds of valor by La Marseillaise in the Revolution; "John Brown's Body," and "Tramp, tramp, tramp" kept up the spirit of the North in the dark days of our own Civil War; and no one has the courage to deny what music did in this last great war; how it fired the patriotism of the soldier; how it inspired the generosity of the man at home; how it brought tears to the eyes of the loved ones left behind; how it comforted the sick and the wounded.

There is no question, then, as to the importance of music in the economy of the world. Nor can there arise naturally any doubt as to the importance of the need of education in music. An art which through the ages has, even in its undeveloped state, exerted such an influence, must hold in its depths a power for good far greater, infinitely larger, than any that has yet been comprehended. Such a power must be utilized, then, in the building up of life, in giving more of joy and peace to man. What the world needs is not bread and butter but a changed mentality, and

music is one of the great factors which will go far in harmonizing the hearts of men. Because the world *does* need ideals of religion, art, music, these are as legitimate and important goals of education as are the more material branches.

For some years past American educators have been awakening to this fact. The educational progress of music in this country during the last half century has been remarkable. Indeed, a noted writer recently declared that not more than twenty-five years ago "music was not part of a serious education; it was a fashionable accomplishment. What were called 'lessons' were given, but nothing was *taught*. Such a method, if method it might be called, is now changed for a full, rational and liberal study, carried on just as thoroughly, as intellectually and as systematically as in any other serious branch of learning."

In this development, the thinking musician has been looking to the *educational* institutions of the country as the place where the furtherance of this progress can best be accomplished. "Music suffers like the drama," says a prominent critic, "from the common use of it among intelligent people for recreation and amusement, rather than as something intellectually profitable and demanding serious mental application as its right." To the university and the college, then, the serious-minded musician has naturally turned, and it is gratifying to see how the doors of those halls of learning are gradually being flung open to his art.

There has been a great deal of agitation in musical circles about the establishing of a National Conservatory of Music, sponsored by the Federal Government under the direct supervision of a proposed Secretary of Fine Arts. Some of the European countries, notably France, have for many years maintained National Conservatories of high rank. Indeed, practically all of the famous musicians of France for over one hundred years are products of the Conservatoire National, and the list is one of which France may well be proud. To many educators these names also give irrefutable answer to the arguments frequently heard against the institutional method of music study. But France is not America. The racial conditions, the governmental situation, the extent of the physical boundaries, the departmental divisions of the state—all are so different in France that the conditions under which the National Conservatory flourishes there do not exist in this country.

The population of France is overwhelmingly native born, akin in temperament, outlook, education. The United States is the most cosmopolitan country in the world. Every shade of

temperament, every phase of racial characteristic is to be found here; a thousand viewpoints have to be considered; an educational condition exists that runs the gamut from illiteracy to the most profound scholarship. The government of the French Republic has always fostered the arts, and the Minister of the Beaux-Arts exercises an important influence in the affairs of state. Our government has not yet formally recognized the fine arts, though probably the time is not far distant when there will be at least some departmental official recognition. In size France is smaller than our largest state; the United States covers an area sixteen times the extent of the French Republic, and it is this great geographical expanse of our country, with the attendant wide variation of popular interests and ideals, which forms the greatest obstacle to the successful establishment of a National Conservatory.

But this very obstacle gives rise to an opportunity for the individual states to build up within their own State Universities institutions devoted to this most beloved of all arts—music. Some of the states have already begun to develop this branch of higher education, and have organized Schools of Music in their State Universities on the same basis as the other colleges. In only one state, however, does the University offer to its young people a thorough education in the different branches of the musical art, with practically no financial expenditure on the part of the student. This is at the University of Illinois. To those who are conversant with the expense of obtaining an education in music this fact looms large, not only from an economic standpoint, but because it heralds a day when music will throughout the country be stamped with the State seal of approval as one of the legitimate factors in academic education.

With this opportunity for music study afforded to the ever-increasing numbers of young people who are crowding the Universities there comes a special responsibility to the musicians who constitute the Faculty of such an institution. It will devolve upon them to so develop the instructional resources, to so foster a zealous enthusiasm, that they may send forth from their schools students who have received the broadening influence of academic studies, who are professionally well equipped as technicians, and who above all have retained for the art the love of the *amateur*, that they, in turn, may go out into every part of their own States to train the coming generation, and to educate the masses in hearing and understanding what is good in music. Too much stress cannot be laid on this last-mentioned opportunity—the educa-

tion of the general public to a comprehension of the real message of music to mankind.

Dr. Dickinson says:

The necessity of instruction in the art of *hearing* music can hardly be denied by one who thinks about the matter. . . . The amateur, too long neglected, is beginning to understand his needs and to make them known. . . . He has no wish to become a brilliant player or vocalist, or if he has, there is no place in his life for the long preparatory drudgery. . . . But he does wish to cultivate his ear and his powers of judgment, to know what to listen for, to hear what musicians hear in a musical performance, to learn in what consist the factors that make good music. . . . in a word, he wishes to make music also, along with books and pictures and all beautiful things, a means of enriching his inward life.

In a University School of Music there are two ways by which this may be accomplished. First, of course, as has already been stated, by so training the students who matriculate in the School of Music that they may go out with an adequate education, and above all with an enthusiasm to spread the leavening influence of good music throughout their State. The second way, however, which will contribute to this accomplishment, is one of far greater importance. It is to bring into the lives of all the students of the University opportunities to hear and to study worthwhile music; to give to the seeking amateur that which will meet his needs; to awaken in the indifferent student an interest in this phase of his cultural education; to convince the scoffer that classical music—so called—is no more out of date than is Shakespeare or Browning, but is comparable in every way to the products of the great minds of literature. This, it may be said, is the outstanding service which a School of Music, as one of the Colleges, can render to its University.

In a survey of the departments of Music in the leading colleges and universities of the country, there seem to be four different aspects of study emphasized. First, musical composition, preceded, of course, by a more or less thorough course in the more elementary branches of theoretical study. Certain of the large Eastern Universities stress this side of the study of music, one of them even offering the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with music the major subject. The second class of schools lays emphasis on the side of virtuosity in public performance, seeking to graduate students who are preëminently successful as executants. A third class aims to give the students interested in music courses of a cultural nature only, leading to a better appreciation of the art, but neglecting to a greater or lesser

degree the practical and the theoretical branches. Then there is a fourth class of schools in which the ideal for the music department is a balance of the three aspects just mentioned—composition, executive ability, and a sincere appreciation of the art. This embraces that for which the ideal University School of Music ought to stand.

In addition to this there must be a certain proportion of time given to subjects of general cultural education outside the realm of music. Just what this proportion should be is a debatable question. Although the worth and necessity of such subjects is not to be denied, the fact that the musical education of the School of Music is of primary importance must not be lost sight of.

There is a tendency in most educational institutions devoted to the art of music to blight the individuality of the student. The process of putting every person through practically the same curriculum mould, hoping to turn him out the same kind of musician as his brother, is a *fallacious* one. It is evident that this could not be followed in other branches of the liberal arts or sciences with any degree of success: A student majoring in Philosophy, for example, can not be made to follow precisely the same curriculum as one who wishes to major in French, if he expects to have any specialized knowledge in his chosen subject. Just so it seems obvious that a student in music who wishes to major in public school music, for example, cannot be well grounded in his particular branch, if he has to follow practically the same curriculum as the student who is majoring in piano.

All education can be divided into two branches, vocational and cultural. Music by its very nature belongs to both. The course of study, then, of the ideal School of Music must look constantly at both these goals. There must always be borne in mind the fact that the duty of an academic institution of music is first of all to provide a foundation of general knowledge, a solid basis, comprehensive in its scope, which will give to its students a technical and an appreciative understanding of music and its relationship to other arts. In addition to this cultural training there must come some degree of specialization in a particular musical branch—the vocational aspect of the training offered. Just what the proportion of these two elements should be is the problem on which leading educators in music are focusing their attention at the present day.

But the School of Music should in no sense be a specialization school. The aim should be to give a broad fundamental training, with an opportunity to develop along one particular line, but not

to emphasize this particular line at the expense of the foundational training. The equipment of the musician who goes out from a collegiate institution with a Bachelor of Music degree ought to be quite analogous in every respect to the equipment of the student who secures the Bachelor of Arts degree. He has completed a course of general foundational knowledge, with special stress laid on one particular branch. But it is only after further pursuit of specialized study that the student becomes an authority in his chosen subject. Similarly, a Bachelor of Music candidate can never expect to be at graduation a great pianist, an accomplished vocal artist, a violin virtuoso. It will only be after further years of concentrated specialized study, that artistic mastery can be obtained.

An American National Conservatory of Music founded and maintained as a kind of graduate school, offering highly specialized work of the finest type only to those who have had adequate previous training, would be of the greatest benefit to music in America. One of the functions of the University School of Music would be, then, the offering of this adequate previous training to the young musicians of the State, that the most talented might go on with the higher education in their particular branch of the profession.

Thus the School of Music in a State University stands in a position to make a signal contribution to the country, to the State, and to its University. It may not be possible to reach all the students, but to many there will come through music the joy of visions of a new world, a spiritual world untrammelled with human sordidness. The ideal kept constantly in mind should be to give to the people of the State through its Music School an enviable opportunity for the foundation of a professional education, and to make it possible for good music to touch the life of every student in the University, that he may realize in some degree the transcendent power of the art to assuage the burdens of mankind and to give joy and peace to life.

ROSSINI : A STUDY

By EDGAR ISTELE

A FULL century ago there rose above the operatic horizon of Venice a brilliant star. *Tancredi* was the name of the magic opera that took all hearts in Italy, and soon throughout Europe as well, by storm. In a twinkling all the misery of the war was forgotten; from gondolier to nobleman, everyone was singing the famous cavatina "Di tanti palpiti," and even the arrival of Emperor Napoleon could not eclipse the fame of him who had suddenly become the hero of the day—the twenty-one-year-old Gioachino Rossini. A few years later, Napoleon's world-imperium lay in ruins, and the all-powerful Corsican, banished to a barren islet, suffered the fate of Prometheus. But Rossini, already compared by his contemporaries to a butterfly flitting over a battlefield, spread his wings ever wider and sang (the "Swan of Pesaro") his new songs on and on to an enraptured world—till suddenly, at the zenith of life and creative power, he fell silent. Thus there lies between Rossini's first triumph and his last but little more than a decade; and while a century separates us from his apogee, only half a century has elapsed since his death.

Who the poet well would know,
To the Poets' land must go.

And whoever would thoroughly understand Rossini, must have been in his native land.

By the violet-blue waters of the Adriatic, very nearly in the latitude of Florence, lies Pesaro, a town of some 20,000 inhabitants. Here the extreme foothills of the Apennines so closely approach the seashore, that scarcely room enough was left for the building of a city, whose port, formed by the narrow river-mouth, accommodates only vessels of the smallest type. The main currents of traffic have barely touched Pesaro, and so the little town, with its cleanly streets and lanes, breathes a spirit of comfortable seclusion. The finest view of Pesaro is to be had from the summit of Monte San Bartolo—the very name reminds one of Rossini—a hill between six and seven hundred feet in height, on whose

western declivity stands the famous Villa Imperiale (now the property of Princess Albani), a beautifully situated countryseat erected by Alessandro Sforza, the cornerstone of which was laid in the year 1469 by Friedrich III, the Roman emperor of the German nation.

Truly, in this land one may, careless as Papataci in the Rossinian aria, "with love and loveliness, jesting and fondling, slumber, and eat, and drink, and ever again slumber, and eat, and drink." Did not the divine



(thus he once jestingly set his name to music) do the same in his time? His conquest of Italy's favor, at the age of twenty-one, with the opera *Tancredi*, reads like a fairy tale; one short cavatina, written in a few minutes, made Rossini the favorite of the nation. (This cavatina, "Di tanti palpiti," was known by the gastronomically jocular title of the "Aria dei risi," because Rossini wrote the piece during the preparation of his repast of rice, which is eaten almost raw in Italy, being boiled only four minutes.) In his old age Rossini once remarked to Auber that in fifty years this melody would probably be the only one of his still extant. Auber advanced the contrary opinion, that the *Barber of Seville* would still be played a hundred years from then, and we know that Auber has proved to be the better prophet of the two. How few now know that renowned "Di tanti palpiti"! Swaying to and fro over the simplest of accompaniments, with a mere handful of supporting chords, it still floats before us in all its charm as a veritable vision of genius.

Stendhal (Henri Beyle), the enthusiastic first biographer of Rossini, tells us:

It made a fine, a genuine *furore*, as they say in that lovely Italian tongue, created for the arts. From the gondolier up to the greatest lord, everybody was repeating "Ti rivedrò, mi rivedrai." The words *mi rivedrai. ti rivedrò*, demand the emotion or a recollection of the fond love of the South.

Of course, Rossini himself immediately became the object of insensate amourettes, and many were the fair aristocrats and artists who, with facile Romanic sanguinity, invited the adored master to tender rendezvous—until some scandal, great or small, made it seem advisable to remove the scene of action to some other town. But only for seventeen years, whose incredible fecundity produced no fewer than fifty operas, did Rossini's star illumine the skies of art; at the age of thirty-seven the master laid down his pen; after the completion of *William Tell* he disappeared from the public eye, and for forty years longer gazed smilingly down, with many a witty observation, on the fevered activities of his ambitious colleagues, who heaped score on score while Rossini, the philosopher, in cheerful enjoyment of the good things of this life, held the composition of a pie to be of more importance than that of the modern orchestra. "Je ne suis qu'un pauvre mélodiste," he would remark with noble modesty when the conversation turned to the intricate scores of a Berlioz and a Wagner, whom the succeeding decades were jubilantly welcoming. In his secret heart he revered only one among the mighty, for whom he felt an affinity, although he could never hope to equal him: the master of *The Marriage of Figaro*, compared with which (so he himself opined) his *Barber of Seville* was a mere farce. Mozart's comedy-operas, Rossini once said, were genuine *dramme giocose*, whereas everything that he himself had composed after the pattern of the Neapolitans was, strictly speaking, simply *opera buffa*. And he presented the celebrated singing-teacher Piermarini with a portrait of Mozart, with the words: "I offer you a portrait of Mozart. Take off your hat, as I do, to the master of masters." The story is also told, that Rossini knelt before the original score of *Don Giovanni*, and kissed it. One of Rossini's finest observations on Mozart, however, we owe to a conversation with Emil Naumann in Paris, to whom he said:

The Germans have always been the greatest harmonists, and we Italians the melodists, in musical art; but since you in the North have brought forth a Mozart, we Southlanders have been beaten on our own field. For this man rises superior to both nations; he combines the full charm of Italian cantilena with all the depth of German sentiment as displayed in the interaction of the parts in his so genially and richly developed harmony. Should Mozart no longer be esteemed as beautiful or sublime—well then, we oldsters who are still left over can cheerfully give up the ghost; but I feel well assured that, in Paradise, Mozart and his hearers will again meet each other.

Rossini, uniting his easyflowing music with thorough workmanship, might have become, thanks to the fairly incredible scope of his talent, a kind of Italian Mozart, had not fate denied him the advantage of a sound training. This was probably also the reason that Rossini halted his creative work so abruptly: he perceived that his technical faculty was incapable of further development, and so he thought it better to cease writing rather than to go on imitating himself after he had produced, in *Tell*, a work that raised him to the rank of the greatest French opera-composers.

However, although Rossini had withdrawn from his proper domain, the operatic stage, he did not pass his days in sheer idleness. He composed a number of works for the Church (the most celebrated among these being the "Stabat Mater"), of which, to be sure, he remarked: "This is no church-music for Germans; my most sacred music is only semi-seria." Indeed, towards the close of his life he called his operas, too, nothing but "old-fashioned stuff," though the author of the *Barber* and *Tell* has not yet become old-fashioned as regards his best works. But during the decades of his retirement Rossini chiefly occupied himself with writing a series of short, facetious compositions which he carefully concealed from publicity, allowing only a very few to be printed and very seldom playing them to his intimates. These little compositions, which are still as good as unknown, can be inspected only at Pesaro in the Liceo Rossini, formerly the palazzo Machirelli. This Liceo Rossini, one of the best Italian conservatories (Mascagni was for a time its Director), occupies premises of princely grandeur; in the garden stands a statue (the work of Marocchetti in 1864) of Rossini, whose name the institute is proud to bear. One carefully guarded room, profusely embellished with portraits and busts of the master, together with most various souvenirs, is also the repository of a vast number of manuscripts which are shielded only in part by glass cases, and to which additions are continually being made. Here are kept the scores of Rossini's operas *Otello*, *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, *Maometto Secondo*, *La Donna del Lago*, *Armida*, *Adina*, and fragments of others. The two first-mentioned operas are the most interesting for the reason that in them may be found celebrated themes from the *Barber of Seville*. The common bond between Othello and Queen Elizabeth, on the one hand, and the jovial Figaro, on the other, is not readily perceptible in our present period of strict differentiation between the serious style and comedy; however, Rossini's unscrupulosity during the years of

carefree youthful productivity was unlimited. For example, in 1814 his opera *Aureliano in Palmira* was nearly a total failure at La Scala; but Rossini thought it a pity to waste the overture, so he prefixed it with some slight alterations to his opera *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, which is based on Schiller's well-known play, *Maria Stuart*. As both operas are serious, that might not have been so inexcusable. But in reality this overture is a positively ideal comedy-overture, as we know to-day from the *Barber of Seville*, as the overture to which Rossini utilized it the year thereafter, for the third time! And whereas this overture does not possess the slightest thematic connection with the *Barber*, Rossini sought to employ certain themes from it in the first finale of *Elisabetta*.

Still more remarkable and more significantly associated is a quotation from the *Barber* in the opera *Otello* of that same year 1816, the third act of which is in part really affecting. All the stranger does it seem to hear, in this third act, in the tragic scene immediately preceding Desdemona's death, the playful motive of Basilio from the aria "*La calunnia è un venticello*" (Calumny's a whispering breezelet), and in the very same key, at that; as if Rossini were here intentionally presenting a tragic example of the effect of that calumny so jovially exemplified in the *Barber*.

Now let us turn to the lesser works housed in the Liceo Rossini, which are mostly from his Parisian period. Peculiarly attractive are the marginal notes made by Rossini on his compositions. Here we find the manuscript of a short mass entitled "*Petite messe solennelle à quatre parties avec accompagnement de piano et harmonium. Dédicée à Madame la Comtesse Louise Pillet-Will per [sic] G. Rossini, Passy 1863,*" to which Rossini annexes, in a delicious mixture of Italian and bad French, the following remarks:

(*At the beginning*) Douze chanteurs de trois sexes, hommes, femmes et castros seront suffisants pour son exécution, savoir huit pour les chœurs, quatre pour les solos, total douze chérubins. Dieu pardonne moi le rapprochement suivant. Douze aussi sont les apôtres dans le célèbre coup de machoire peint à fresque par Léonard, dit la Cène. Qui le croirait! il y a parmi les disciples de ceux qui prennent de fausses notes!! Seigneur, rassure toi, j'affirme qu'il n'y aura pas de Judas à mon déjeuner et ce que les miens chanteront juste et con amore tes louanges et cette petite composition qui est hélas le dernier péché mortel de ma vieillesse.

(*At the end*) Bon dieu—La voilà terminée cette pauvre petite Messe. Est-ce bien de la Musique sacrée que je viens de faire ou bien

de la Sacrée Musique? J'étais né pour l'opéra buffa, tu le sais bien! Peu de science, un peu de cœur, tout est là. Sois donc béni, et accorde moi le Paradis. G. Rossini.—Passy, 1863.¹

Is not this a touchingly naïve address to the Creator, despite the genuine Rossinian wit that seems to border on blasphemy? Other sins of old age ("peccati di vecchiezza") he mentions are twelve pieces in the "Album Italiano," the third of which bears the original title: "Tirana alla spagnola Rossinizzata" (Tirana in Spanish style, Rossinified). As a pendant, Rossini wrote an "Album Français" containing an equal number of pieces, No. 9 being "Adieux à la Vie" for mezzo-soprano and progressing in a straight line on one and the same note, like Cornelius's "Ein Ton." Still another album of twelve pieces, "Morceaux Réservés," embraces a curious medley beginning with a Lament on the death of Meyerbeer (with whom Rossini was on the most friendly terms) and ending with a Tyrolienne, "Le Départ," for four female voices. To this Rossini appends, "Un peu de tout. Je dédie ces péchés de vieillesse aux pianistes de la 4^{me} classe, à laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'appartenir." (A little of everything. I dedicate these sins of old age to pianists of the 4th class, to which I have the honor to belong.) In similar vein is the title of the next Album—consisting, like all the rest, of twelve pieces—"Album de Chaumière" (Album of the [Laborer's] Cottage). Here the pieces begin to take on grotesque names, which might easily be interpreted as a humorous mimicry of the program-music then already pushing to the front. Alongside of a "Valse boiteuse" (limping waltz), a "Prélude inoffensif" (inoffensive prelude), and a program-number, "Un profond sommeil.—Un réveil en sursaut" (Profound slumber.—Abrupt awakening), we find a "Petite valse" with the absurdly comical subtitle of "L'huile de ricin" (Castor-oil). This piece therefore presents the operation of that frequently indispensable household remedy in waltz-form, and the drastic effect of Rossini's tone-speech leaves nothing to be desired. It certainly is a very "fluently" written piece!

¹Twelve singers of three sexes, men, women and castratos, will suffice for its execution, namely, eight for the choruses, four for the solos—total, twelve cherubim. May God forgive me the following association. Twelve likewise are the apostles in the celebrated jaw act painted *al fresco* by Leonardo, called *La Cena*. Who would believe it! Among the disciples are some who are taking false notes!! Lord, be reassured, I affirm that there will be no Judas at my breakfast, and that my disciples will sing correctly and *con amore* Thy praises and this little composition which, alas, is the last mortal sin of my old age.

Good Lord!—now it's finished, my poor little Mass. Is this really sacred Music that I have just written, or Accursed Music? I was born for opera buffa, well Thou knowest! Little science, some little heart, that is all. Be therefore praised, and grant me Paradise.

In the following "Album pour les enfants adolescents" (Album for Youthful Adolescents) gastronomy, to which entire cycles are later devoted, plays a part. "Ouf! Les petits pois" (Ouch! Little green peas) is the title of one piece, and another is called "Prélude convulsif" (convulsive prelude). Funny enough are the titles "Thème naïf et variations idem" (Artless theme and ditto variations) and "L'innocence italienne" (Italian Innocence) with the adjoining "La candeur française" (French Modesty). This collection also contains a political number, "La Lagune de Venise à l'expiration de l'année 1861!!!" (The lagoon of Venice at the end of the year 1861), in which Rossini writes eight *p's* at the beginning to indicate an extreme *pianissimo*. For some passages explanatory notes are added, such as "L'ombre de Radetski!! Arrivée de S.M.!!! La lagune baissante d'une tierce" (The Shade of Radetski!! Arrival of His Majesty!!! The lagoon falls by a third). Culinary science is represented by the last piece, "Hachis romantique" (Romantic Hash), a very "grateful" number for the pianist.

The next collection is entitled "Album des enfants dégourdis pour Piano" (Piano-Album for limber children), with another curious selection of titles: "Mon prélude hygiénique du matin" (My hygienic morning prelude), "Memento homo" (Bethink thee, O man), "Assez de memento. Dansons" (Enough of be-thinking. Come dance), "Valse torturée" (Tortured waltz), "Une caresse à ma femme" (A caress for my wife), "Fausse couche de Polka-Mazurka" (Abortive Polka-Mazurka), "Étude asthmatique" (Asthmatic étude). And there is a very pretty tribute to Pesaro, called "La Pesarese."

Most original of all is the 9th piece, "Un petit train de plaisir" (A little excursion train), tragi-comically depicting the joys and sorrows of a railway trip in the 'sixties. The program reads: "Allegro. Cloche d'appel.—Montée en wagon.—En avant la machine.—Siflet satanique. Douce Mélodie du frein (scala semitonata). Arrivée à la gare. Andante : Les lions parisiens offrant la main aux biches pour descendre du wagon.—Primo tempo (Suite de voyage).—Terrible déraillement du convoi.—Premier blessé. Second blessé.—Premier mort en paradis. Second mort en enfer.—Largo.—Chant funèbre. Amen. On ne m'attrapera pas. Douleur aigle des hérétiques. Tout ceci est plus que naïf, mais c'est vrai."¹

¹Allegro. Bell-rings—All aboard.—The engine starts.—Satanic whistle. Sweet song of the brake (chromatic scale). Arrival at the station. Andante : The Parisian

In the "Album du Château" we find "Spécimen de l'ancien régime, Spécimen de mon temps" (originally entitled "Prélude prétentieux"—pretentious prelude), and "Spécimen de l'avenir" (of the future; originally "Prélude de l'avenir"). There is also a "Valse antidansante" (undanceable waltz) in this dozen. There is more "admirable fooling" in the Album for Piano, Violin, Violoncello, Harmonium and Horn, which has no special title. No. 7 is "Marche et reminiscences pour mon dernier voyage" (March and reminiscences for my last journey). Among the marginal notes we find Reminiscences of *Tancredi*, *Cenerentola*, *La Donna del Lago*, *Semiramide*, *Conte Ory*, *Tell*, *Otello*, *Barber of Seville*—i.e., from such of his operas as Rossini liked the best. Then follows: "Mon portrait, allons, on ouvre, j'y suis, Requiem" (My portrait; come on, you open it, I'm there. Requiem). In the next piece, "Prélude, thème et variations pour cor avec accompagnement de piano," there is a "Variante pour les paresseux" (variant for lazy folk). No. 11 bears the original title "Échantillon de blague mélodique sur les noirs de la main droite" (Sample of melodic chatter on the crotchets of the right hand), with the marginal note "Chante cochon" (swine song) at one passage. No. 12 is called "Petite fanfare à quatre mains" (*fanfare* meaning either a "flourish," or a "bit of bravado," or both!), and has the note "La droite à Mademoiselle, la gauche à Monsieur" (the *primo* part for the young lady, the *secondo* for the gentleman); while at the end the old satirist, who probably had himself experienced the dangers of four-hand playing with young ladies, adds the remark: "Je prie mes interprètes de vouloir exécuter avec amour (des mains et des genoux) ma petite fanfare" (I beg my interpreters to be so kind as to execute my little fanfare lovingly—as regards both hands and knees).

Rossini displays the complete gourmand in the following little cycles, where he sets to music the hors-d'œuvres and the dessert. The four "hors-d'œuvres" are entitled: 1. Radis. 2. Anchois.—Thème et variations. 3. Cornichons.—Introduction, thème et variations. 4. Beurre.—Thème et variations.¹

The Dessert Study is headed "Un peu de tout. Pêchées de vieillesse de G. Rossini" (A little of everything. Senile sins

dandies handing their sweethearts down from the carriages.—*Primo tempo* (continuation of the trip).—Terrible derailment of train.—First wounded person. Second wounded person.—First dead person in Paradise. Second dead person in Hades.—*Largo*: Funeral chant. Amen. They won't fool me. Bitter anguish of the heirs. All this is more than naïve, but it's true.

¹Radishes. Anchovies. Gherkins (or Simpletons!). Butter.

of G. Rossini). 1. Les figues sèches (Dry figs). Marginal note : "Me voilà.—Bonjour, Madame" (Here I am.—Good-morning, Madam).¹ 2. Les Amandes (Almonds). Marginal note : "Minuit sonne. Bon soir, Madame"² (Midnight strikes. Good-evening, Madam). Here the music imitates the striking of the clock. 3. Les raisins (Grapes). Marginal note : "A ma petite parruche. Foutre, foutre. Bonjour Rossini! Bonjour farceur! oh c'te tête. Portez l'arme. Présentez l'arme, en joue—feu—Rantaplan, rantaplan, plan, plan. J'ai du bon tabac dans mon tabatière. J'ai du bon tabac, tu n'en auras pas.—Quand je bois du vin clairet, tout tourne au cabaret" (To my little Poll-parrot.³ Fie, fie!⁴ Good-morning, Rossini! Good-morning, jollyer! Oh, what a head. Carry arms! Present arms! Ready, aim—fire!—Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub, dub, dub. I've some fine tobacco in my pouch. I've some fine tobacco, you'll get none of it.—When I drink red wine and sound, all the room goes round and round).⁵—4. Les noisettes (Hazelnuts). "A ma chère Nini. Pensée d'amour à ma chienne" (To my dear Nini. Love-thought for my pet).

Of the seven numbers contained in the collection "Miscellanée pour Piano," the last is the most interesting—"Petit caprice (Style Offenbach)." Rossini, who did not have his "senile sins" printed, very seldom regaled his friends with any of these pieces. So it is especially interesting to know that he once played this little piece to Hanslick. The famous Viennese essayist, in his little known collection "Aus dem Konzertsaal" (1870), to which are appended the "Musikalische Reisebriefe" from Paris, London and Switzerland, narrates the incident thus:

We gladly followed Rossini's invitation to descend to the ground floor. We entered the bright, roomy salon with its frescoed ceiling and high windows into which leaned nodding rosebushes. In the centre of the salon stood a Pleyel grand piano. As everybody knows, Rossini showed a special fondness for the piano in his later years, and this belated virtuosity affords him a medium for incessant jests—many of the stereotyped pattern. He immediately began to complain that Schulhoff would not allow him any credit as a pianist. "Of course I don't practise scales every day, like you young people—for when I run a scale across the whole keyboard I fall off the stool to right or left." At Schulhoff's request Rossini played us one of his pianistic jokes, the "Offenbach Capriccio." The genesis of the piece may be traced to the remark of an

¹Very likely a *double entendre* not to be hinted at in English.

²Ditto.

³Rossini's parrot was probably fond of grapes, and after the feast some such "conversation" would ensue.

⁴Untranslatable.

⁵The last two sentences are snatches of popular songs.

Italian to Rossini, that Offenbach had the "evil eye," and so one must make the sign for the *jettatore* (pointing with the outstretched forefinger and little finger) in his presence. "And so one ought to play before Offenbach like this," jested Rossini, whereupon he improvised on the piano an elfish bagatelle whose melody he executed admirably with two outstretched fingers of his right hand. I remarked on certain clever, original modulations, and Rossini was then so obliging as to play me the old "Marlborough" song with his own harmonization. It is astonishing that precisely Rossini, to whom the subtleties of modulation had always been foreign, should have thus embellished the old folk-song with a wealth of highly ingenious harmonies and enharmonic surprises. In some other pieces for voice and for piano that I heard at one of his soirées, I also noted Rossini's new penchant for basses of marked distinction, and a more animated modulation. Far be it from me to set too high a value on these final flickerings of a flame that is practically spent; but I find it interesting that at the age of seventy-five the style of the Swan of Pesaro should still be capable of taking such a characteristic turn.

So far Hanslick. Unfortunately, I could not find the Marlborough variations at Pesaro; at the time of my visit there I was unaware of the fanciful origin ascribed to the Offenbach *Capriccio*, and therefore took down only the initial measures, which in themselves make it evident that the piece is a two-finger exercise:



Be it said that Offenbach also made fun of Rossini; in *La belle Hélène* he parodies the well-known terzetto in *Guillaume Tell*.

There is a group of ten vocal pieces by Rossini, entitled "Miscellanée de musique vocale." A very droll one is "La Chanson du bébé," set for mezzo-soprano on a text by Pacini and restricted for the most part to the baby's natural utterances. In one place Rossini adds a variant "if the singer is not too bashful" (*si le chanteur n'est pas trop timide*), and at the close we find "Maman, Papa (three times), pipi, caca"—a sort of infantile categorical imperative. There is also a mirth-provoking Requiem for Rossini's mother-in-law; during this lady's lifetime he had presumably never dedicated a piece to her.

Another group, "Quelques Riens pour Album" (Some Nothing for the Album), embracing twenty-four pieces, calls for no special comment. Among the remaining miscellaneous MSS., some of which are of considerable magnitude, may be noticed a Hymn to Napoleon III (words by Pacini), with the following observations by Rossini: "A Napoléon III et son vaillant peuple.

Hymne (avec accompagnement à grand orchestre et musique militaire) pour Bariton, un pontif-chœur de grands prêtres, chœur de vivandières, de soldats et de peuple, danses, cloches, tambours et canons. Excusez du peu!! Passy, 1867" (To Napoleon III and his brave people. Hymn—with accompaniment of grand orchestra and military band—for Baritone, a pontifical chorus of High Priests, chorus of vivandières, soldiers and populace, dances, bells, drums and cannons. Excuse scant measure!! Passy, 1867).

He shows a similar spirit of mockery in a "Canon antisavant à 3 voix" (unscientific three-part canon) "dédié aux Turcos par le singe de Pesaro"¹ (dedicated to the Turks by the monkey of Pesaro). Rossini also wrote the words: "Vive l'empereur, de France la splendeur. Vive! vive! vive! vive!" (Long live the Emperor, splendor of France. Long may he live!) Rossini's irreverence went to greater extremes. A second canon, "Canone perpetuo per 4 Soprani" (perpetual canon for 4 sopranos), bears the following elucidation: "Indicante i modi vocali usati dai cantori della Pontificia cappella Sistina. Da capo jusqu'à extinction de chaleur naturelle" (illustrating the vocal style of the Pontifical Sistine Choir. *Da capo* until extinction of the natural warmth). The partly nonsensical, partly derisive text reads, in translation: "So soon as the heavens are darkened, we hear the strange song of the castrati, great, great, great, great their song in this wise; this the brilliant singing, this the battlesong." The chief point is, that all imaginable vocal vices of the castrati are held up for ridicule. Rossini wrote out the canon only for the first voice, indicating the entrances of the other two by signs. The piano-part is written out by itself below.

Now, and finally, a bit of program-music entitled "Little Stroll from Passy to Courbevoie" (it was in Passy, near Paris, that Rossini wrote nearly all these little pieces). In this, according to its author, the chromatic scales of all the keys are employed "homéopathiquement et à la Pesarese" (homœopathically and in Pesaro style) except that of E major, which is forgotten till shortly before the end. So Rossini writes on the margin: "Mi gran dièse, pardon de t'avoir oublié!! Rassure toi, je suis encore en mesure de te fourrer dans ma petite promenade. Suif et tu verras" (Pardon me, great E major, for forgetting you!! Be reassured, I can still take measures to enlist you in my little stroll. Follow me, and you shall see).

¹Rossini's travesty of the "Swan of Pesaro," the famous appellation devised by his admirers.

Here ends our "little stroll" through Rossini's homeland. The sun is sinking behind the mountains, and gilds the sea-girt horizon with his expiring rays. On the shore gathers a swarming crowd; the town has awakened from its afternoon siesta and sends its indwellers down into the mild airs of eventide. A military band is playing the *Tell* overture, wherein Rossini's motto "*Melodia semplice e varietà nel ritmo*"¹ celebrates a triumph.

Manifestly, Rossini was Wagner's direct opposite. With all his admiration for Wagner's brilliant qualities, he emphasizes again and again (and hardly without good reason) the thought that in Wagner's works there are, alongside of the grandest efforts, the most intolerable prolixities. "*M. Wagner a de beaux moments, mais de mauvais quarts d'heure*" (Wagner has fine moments, but bad quarter-hours). As a matter of fact, this malicious witticism did not develop its sharpest point until the completion of the "*Ring*" and "*Parsifal*." And nowadays, when we are well over many superheated enthusiasms of hair-brained youth, we are better able to appreciate that shrewd remark of the mature Rossini:

No one is further than I from casting doubts upon Wagner's originality, and hitherto I have followed his career with the closest attention. There is only one thing that I could not understand, and do not yet understand, namely, why it is possible that a people who brought forth a Mozart can begin to forget him over a Wagner.

Wagner himself, by no means so one-sided as his blind adherents, had rather impatiently expressed his opinion about Rossini, but changed his mind after his celebrated visit to the maestro (1860, in Paris). Although Wagner makes only brief mention of this visit, and Rossini left us nothing at all in writing about it, we are well informed concerning it by the report of Edmond Michotte, who was present at the conversation and immediately afterwards committed it to paper. During the discussion Wagner tried to convince the Italian master, by citing passages in the latter's own operas *Mosè* and *Tell*, that Rossini had already unconsciously applied various musico-dramatic principles whose consistent development Wagner conceived to be his life-work. On the other hand, Rossini more than once drove Wagner into a corner by clever repartee, but was evidently profoundly impressed by his powerful personality. And Wagner, too, felt the charm of a great individuality, for he observed: "Much abuse is heaped on Rossini; but it's only his originality that irritates us."

¹Simple melody, variety in rhythm.

Rossini also spoke at length to Wagner about his (Rossini's) visit to Beethoven, concerning which there was much idle talk, and nothing authentic was to be learned. To Wagner Rossini said:

It was at Vienna in the year 1822, when my opera *Zelmira* was produced there. In Milan I had already heard Beethoven quartets, and I hardly need assure you with what admiration! Besides, I knew some of his piano sonatas. In Vienna I attended, for the first time, the performances of one of his symphonies, the *Eroica*. This music thrilled me. My sole thought was, to meet this great genius, to visit him, if but for a single time. To this end I addressed myself to Salieri, knowing him to have associations with Beethoven. He told me that he, in fact, occasionally visited Beethoven, but that on account of his gloomy and fantastic temperament it would be a matter of some difficulty to gratify my wish. In order to assist me, he approached the Italian poet Carpani, who was *persona grata* with Beethoven, and by whose aid he hoped to find favor with the master. And Carpani actually succeeded in persuading Beethoven to grant permission for my visit.

(Rossini had told Michotte that his first attempt, aided and abetted by the publisher Artaria, to visit Beethoven had miscarried, for Beethoven had sent back word that he was sick and could see no one. On this incident Schindler very likely based his assertion, in his Beethoven biography, that the master had refused admission to the Italian musician.)

Shall I say it? I could with difficulty control my agitation while ascending the stair leading to the great man's mean abode. On entering the door I found myself in a sort of anteroom, extremely dirty and in frightful disorder. I remember in particular now that the ceiling, which was directly under the roof, showed great cracks through which the rain would certainly pour in streams.

The familiar Beethoven portraits convey, on the whole, a fairly good impression of his physiognomy. But what no copperplate can express is the ineffable sadness in all his features, while from beneath the bushy eyebrows, as from the depths of caverns, there shone a pair of eyes which, though small, seemed to pierce me through and through. His voice was mild, and a trifle hoarse.

Upon our entrance (Carpani accompanied me) he remained for a few moments bent over some proofsheets, whose correction he finished before paying any attention to us. Then he raised his head and said to me abruptly: "Ah! you are Rossini, the composer of the *Barber of Seville*? I congratulate you on it; it is an admirable comedy-opera; I have read it with pleasure, and taken real delight in it. As long as Italian opera-houses exist, it will be played. But do not attempt to write anything else but comedy-operas; to seek success in other styles of art would be a tempting of Providence."—"But," interrupted Carpani (as you will understand, he was writing with pencil in the German language, that being the only way to carry on a conversation with Beethoven, but

translating word for word for my benefit), "maestro Rossini has also written a large number of serious operas, such as *Tancredi*, *Mosè*, *Otello*; I sent them to you a short time ago with a recommendation to look them over."

"Yes, and I have looked through them," said Beethoven, "but, you see, the serious opera is simply not congenial to the Italians. For the treatment of genuine drama your knowledge of music is too slight—but then, how should you learn more in Italy?—In the comedy-opera," continued Beethoven, "no one can hope to rival you Italians; your language and the animation of your temperament predestine you for it. Just look at Cimarosa—how far the comedy passages in his operas surpass all the rest. It is precisely the same with Pergolese. Everybody knows what a to-do you Italians make over his church music. He certainly did express very touching emotion in his *Stabat Mater*; but the form is wanting in variety, and has a monotonous effect, quite the contrary to the *Serva padrona*." . . .

My visit at Beethoven's was naturally a short one, as all one side of the conversation had to be carried on in writing. I expressed my admiration for his genius, and my gratitude that he had permitted me to express it in person. He responded with a deep sigh and the brief ejaculation: "Oh, un infelice!"

In a little while he asked me for some details about the Italian theatres, the best-known singers, whether Mozart's operas were often given there, whether I was satisfied with the Italian opera-troupe in Vienna. Then, wishing me a fine performance and good success for *Zelmira*, he escorted us as far as the door, and said to me again: "Above all things, write a great deal of music in the style of the *Barber*!"

While descending that wretched stair I felt myself so painfully affected by my visit to the great man, when I thought of his forlorn and helpless state, that I could not repress my tears. "Oh bosh!" said Carpani, "he wants nothing better. He is a cross-grained man-hater, and cannot stay friends with anyone."

The same evening I attended a banquet given by Prince Metternich. Still quite upset by that visit, that sorrowful "un infelice!" ever ringing in my ears, I must admit that I could not rid myself of a feeling of bewilderment, on finding myself treated by this brilliant assemblage with such comparatively great consideration; and so it came about that I spoke my mind freely and unreservedly concerning the attitude of the court and the aristocracy toward the greatest genius of our time, to whom so little attention was paid and who was allowed to live in such misery. I received an answer similar to that already given me by Carpani. I asked, whether the fact of Beethoven's deafness did not call for the greatest sympathy, and whether it would not be far more generous to overlook any weaknesses imputed to him than to bring them forward as reasons for denying him assistance. I added, that by means of a moderate subscription supported by all wealthy families, it would be very easy to insure him an income sufficient to secure him from want for the remainder of his life. But none of those present received this suggestion with favor.

After the banquet there began a reception at which the foremost names in Vienna society were represented in the salons of the Metternich

palace. There was also a concert. On the program was a new work, just published, by Beethoven—always He, everywhere He, as is said of Napoleon.—The new masterwork was reverently listened to and received great applause. Hearing it thus, among these prominent society folk, I reflected sadly that perhaps, at this very moment, the great man in his lonely chamber might be finishing some work of lofty inspiration destined, like its predecessor, to lavish its superlative beauties on this selfsame showy aristocracy that cared not a whit for the misery of the man who created this beauty for its delight.

Although I did not succeed in obtaining an annual income for Beethoven, I was not discouraged. I set out to raise a capital sum to purchase a dwelling-house for him. I succeeded in obtaining some promises of subscriptions; but the sum total, with the addition of my own share, was very moderate. So I had to give up this second plan, as well. Everybody answered me with "You know him too little. Supposing that Beethoven got a house, he would sell it again the very next day. He will never be satisfied to stay in any dwelling, for with him it is a necessity to change his lodgings every six months, and his servants every six weeks."—Was this a plea for non-acceptance?¹

Touching his visit to Beethoven, Rossini, besides what he told Wagner, once spoke to Blaze de Bury, but only in passing and aphoristically: "He received me rather badly; nevertheless, for me he is still the greatest of musicians." "And Mozart," queried Blaze, "how about him?" Whereupon Rossini replied with ready wit: "Permettez, Beethoven est le plus grand, mais Mozart, voyez-vous, c'est le seul" (Allow me—Beethoven is the greatest, but Mozart, you see, is the only one).

What Beethoven had to say about Rossini is just as little known as Rossini's real opinion on Beethoven. Usually, only the phrase "geschickter Theatermaler" (clever scene-painter) is quoted, together with the testy remark in the conversation-book for 1825: "Dieser Wicht von Rossini wird von keinem wahren Meister der Kunst geachtet" (This fellow Rossini is respected by no true master of the art). But Beethoven had also expressed himself differently. E.g., in 1824, to Freudenberg:

Rossini is a composer brimful of talent and melody. His music just suits the frivolous, sensuous spirit of the times, and for writing an opera his productive faculty needs only as many weeks as the Germans need years.

And when Beethoven said to Schindler: "Rossini would have become a great composer if his teacher had oftener given him a whack *ad posteriora*," he said nothing more than what Rossini had said about himself to Wagner. Again: during a conversation in Haslinger's music-shop Beethoven observed:

¹Était-ce une fin de non-recevoir?

Look at your idol, Rossini! If Fortuna hadn't gifted him with a pretty talent and beguiling melodies by the score, he could never have done better than line his belly with potatoes.

That Rossini's honoraria were not quite so princely as was generally taken for granted, may be gathered from some remarks he made to Ferdinand Hiller. For his first sensationally successful opera, *Tancredi*, he received (so he said) only 500 francs; for his last Italian opera, *Semiramide*, 5000 francs, besides being upbraided for his high price (to be sure, money-values of that time are not to be remotely compared with the present). Rossini asserted that never in his life had he made enough by his art to save anything, excepting when he was engaged in London. And in London he made no money as a composer, but only as an accompanist.

It may have been a mere prejudice, but I felt a sort of repugnance against taking payment for playing accompaniments on the piano, and I did so only in London. However, they wanted to see my nose and hear my wife, too. For our participation in musical soirées I had fixed the fairly high price of fifty pounds, and we attended some sixty such soirées, so that was quite worth while. Anyhow, in London the musicians do anything to make money, and I had some amusing experiences there. For instance, the first time I undertook the accompaniments at one of those soirées, they told me that Puzzi, the celebrated hornist, and Dragonetti, the still more celebrated contrabassist, would also be there. I supposed they would play solos—but not at all! they were to help me accompany. I asked them, "Have you got accompanying parts for all these pieces?" "Oh pshaw!" was the answer, "but we are well paid, and so we make up the accompaniment as we go along." However, such improvised attempts at instrumentation were too risky for me, so I begged Dragonetti to content himself with throwing in a few pizzicati when I should tip him the wink, and requested Puzzi to strengthen the closing cadences with some few tones which he, as a good musician, readily caught. So it went off without any untoward incidents, and everybody was satisfied.—But the English have nevertheless made great advances in musical matters; at present much good music is performed in London, and it is heard with attention, that is, in the public concerts. In the drawing-rooms music still plays a pitiful part, and many ungifted persons push themselves forward with incredible assurance, and, moreover, give instruction in matters of which they understand as good as nothing at all.

Rossini said, furthermore, that he had been the recipient of attentions from English people such as one could hardly expect elsewhere; that he could never forget the behavior of the music-loving Duke of Devonshire.

Not entirely so favorable was Rossini's opinion of the French, in whose midst he spent the last years of his life. Their ad-

miration pleased him, but he objected to their habit of paying compliments and to their insistence on talking with him about his works.

And they can't refrain from doing it, from the highest in society down to the *concierge*. I believe I have never known a Frenchman who did not ask me which of my operas I liked the best. They are friendly and appreciative, are the French, but they overdo it.

The Italians, on the contrary (according to Rossini), distinguish themselves by a fine indifference; but in this direction, too, things can be carried too far. Concerning German music, Rossini thus expressed himself:

I not only love the great German masters, but studied them by preference from earliest youth, and have lost no opportunity to become more and more familiar with them. What a colossal intellect, this Bach! To write such a quantity of compositions in such a style! It is inconceivable. What was difficult or impossible for others was play for him.

So Rossini naturally joined the *Bachgesellschaft*, and declared that the arrival of a new volume made a red-letter day for him. The early deaths of Weber and Mendelssohn—he had known both masters personally—caused him the deepest grief. "With what delicacy, what intelligence, could Mendelssohn treat the smallest motif!" He found it strange, especially, that Mendelssohn had not written an opera. "The Germans usually begin with instrumental music, and that possibly renders it difficult for them to submit to the laws of vocal music. It goes hard with them to assume simplicity, whereas the Italians find it hard not to be trite." Certainly a masterpiece of keen, clear characterization! The aging master assuredly had a right to his opinion, and he was the last to assign greater importance to his hastily penned juvenile scores than posterity has accorded them. But how little is known of the conditions under which the youthful Rossini had to work.

In Italy I never got a finished libretto when I began to write; I composed the Introductions before the poet had written the next-following numbers. And how often did I have for a poet a man who, though he did not write badly, had no idea of the requirements of the musician; I had to work with them, instead of their working for me. When I was engaged by Barbaja in Naples (at 8000 francs, with free board and lodging), I was obliged to look after everything that concerned the opera, to superintend every rehearsal—Barbaja did not pay one bill that I had not indorsed—and besides, I had made an agreement to supply two operas yearly!

Respecting young Rossini's method of composition I find a picturesque description in an unremembered brochure by d'Ortigue, "De la guerre des dilettantis, ou de la révolution opérée par Mr. Rossini dans l'opéra français" (Paris, 1829). A friend of Rossini's tells the author:

When he wishes to compose, he sits down at the piano; he preludes at haphazard, disorderly and disconnectedly, his fingers following his thoughts quite mechanically. He happens to hit on a felicitous motif; he repeats it joyously, and then goes on a search after another, without fearing that he may forget the first. It is graven on his memory, he can find it again whenever he will. He does not take up the pen until he has the whole opera in his head; then he closes the piano, not to open it again, and writes with incredible rapidity.

That Rossini possessed a wonderful musical memory as a young man was his boast in old age. He told Hiller that he had overawed the composer Mombelli, who refused him a copy of an aria, by threatening to write out the entire opera from memory—having already taken down that particular aria.

Altogether, our young Rossini was much given to wild pranks, a devil-may-care sort of fellow. Success he must have, if he would not suffer hunger—and anything rather than that! How charming is his avowal to Blaze de Bury, wherein is reflected Rossini's whole philosophy of life:

Next to doing nothing, I know no more delightful occupation than eating—I mean, of course, eating that may properly be called eating. As love for the heart, so is appetite for the stomach. The stomach is the conductor who mobilizes and controls the grand orchestra of our passions. The empty stomach symbolizes only the bassoon or the piccolo, growling in displeasure or screaming in desire; the full stomach, per contra, is the triangle of delectation or the tam-tam of rejoicing. For me, Love is the *primadonna par excellence*, the goddess who sings to the brain her cavatinas that intoxicate the ear and fascinate the heart. Eating and loving, singing and digesting—these are in very truth the four acts of the comedy-opera we call Life, evanescent as the foam of a bottle of champagne. He who lets it pass away without enjoying it, is a born fool!

This life-philosophy found its counterpart in his appearance, according to the description by Escudier in the year 1823, at Paris:

The expression of his countenance was noble and sympathetic. His fine, alert, penetrating eye held the onlooker as by a magnetic spell. His smile, at once benevolent and critical, reflected his spirit in full. The pure curve of his Roman nose, his imposing and prominent forehead, left quite exposed by early baldness, the regular oval of his face framed in black side-whiskers, all united to form a type of manly and captivating

beauty. He had an exquisitely modelled hand, which he allowed to peep through the white cuff with a certain coquetry. He was simply clad, neat rather than elegant, and favored a blue habit with gold buttons and a white waistcoat.

He was sought out a few years later by Ferdinand Hiller, who presents a somewhat less idealized portrait in his almost forgotten "Briefe an eine Ungenannte" (Cologne, 1877):

Gradually grown to the full height of a European celebrity, in contact with the most refined society, he remoulded himself into a highly cultured man of the world; and, without restraining his propensity for smiling mockery or, at least, smiling irony, he could play, when he pleased, the part of a reserved gentleman, without doing violence to his natural disposition. Although he rarely opened a book, he had acquired a perfectly pure French, his voice and whole intonation being of a most melting suavity. His well-formed head, his finely cut features, with their continual play of astuteness and charm, acuteness and kindliness, tenderness and mockery, lent him an irresistible attraction, and one could often hardly tell whether one took greater pleasure in what he said or in the way in which he expressed it. At that time in Paris he was excessively corpulent, the consequence of much macaroni and much sleep, for he had a passionate fondness for his bed, and had written many of his loveliest numbers while recumbent betwixt waking and sleeping. It was at a dinner in the Rothschild mansion that I was introduced to him; at table I very likely made a rather serious face and had very little to say. "Vous êtes l'homme le plus gai que j'ai jamais connu, c'est-à-dire après le pape!" (You are the merriest man I ever knew, that is to say, next to the Pope!) he exclaimed to me as we rose.

This is just one small sample of Rossini's inexhaustible wit, about which thousands of anecdotes are current, and even if they are not all true, they are at least more or less cleverly invented. Many of them were publicly repudiated by Rossini, e.g., that malicious joke touching Wagner, whose music Rossini was said to have likened to a gravy without fish. But very many others are doubtless genuine, like his delicious characterization of a certain diva: "Elle a l'air d'un éléphant qui aurait avalé un rosignol" (She looks like an elephant that has swallowed a nightingale). But I shall resist the temptation to parade a selection of Rossini anecdotes, contenting myself with presenting, from among the numerous observations of his contemporaries which I have collected for a future Rossini biography, a perspicuous description of the maturer Rossini's method of composition which we likewise owe to Ferdinand Hiller ("Briefe an eine Ungenannte"). Other interesting material regarding Rossini, particularly with reference to his younger years, was gathered by Hiller in conversations with the master ("Aus dem Tonleben unserer Zeit," Leipzig, 1868).

Rossini worked (as he expressed himself to Hiller) "somewhat more carefully" on *William Tell* than on his earlier operas. Hiller proceeds:

With his genial facility, he had sketched out the greater part of the work on paper, that is, only the vocal parts and here and there some little instrumental figures were written into the future score. Then he began on the instrumentation, and for hours at a time I often watched him at work. Towards 10 o'clock the master came into his great salon, which had a view over the Boulevard Montmartre. He took a cup of bouillon with a thin crust of bread, then took his stand at a broad writing-desk which was placed near the window (not far from it was a very mediocre square piano), and commenced his labors. Unannounced, hardly stopping to knock, in came whoever would of his friends and acquaintances. Some he greeted with a nod, with others he exchanged a few words, sometimes even chatted for a quarter of an hour; as a general thing he spent five, six, or more hours writing at his desk. It did not disturb him in the least when I watched him close at hand for a considerable length of time, following his method of procedure and enjoying nice details in the treatment. On the contrary, it seemed to amuse him. Once in a while he would sit down at the piano to play and sing a number of which he presumably wished to assure himself, but that happened very seldom. Those present behaved as if they were in a café—they had no refreshments, to be sure, but the freest, liveliest and loudest conversation was permitted, to which one even felt an incitement in the fact that our host, busy with his writing, evidently desired no consideration whatever, and it almost seemed as if he liked it the better the louder it became.

Of all else that has been written about Rossini, the biography by his friend and compatriot, Antonio Zanolini (Bologna, 1875), strikes me as the most valuable; its faithful portrayal of Rossini's youth received Rossini's personal approval. Here I find, hidden away in the Appendix under the modest heading "Ein Spaziergang in Gesellschaft Rossini's" (A Walk in Company with Rossini), an esthetic confession of the master's from the year 1837 that outweighs ponderous tomes of scholarly estheticism. Following are extracts giving Rossini's best thoughts, without Zanolini's rejoinders:

It is a general and gross error among musicians, and more particularly musical scientists, to believe that music is an imitative art. That it is not, but a wholly ideal art as regards its principle, and, as regards its aim, stimulative and expressive. Music has neither the intention nor the capacity to convey to the ear an impression of everything that mankind hears. Music animates, encourages, consoles and rejoices mankind; it speaks to their hearts a new language which is theirs alone; it stimulates the passions and emotions. As you know, music possesses four chief characteristics—it is warlike, pastoral, serious and graceful. Music can only imperfectly imitate whatever produces actual tone—

rain, thunderstorms, dirges, the noises of festivity. As for song, it does indeed imitate declamation after a fashion, in accord with its expressive nature, but such a limited capacity is not to be considered as the essential quality of imitation. Music is a lofty art precisely for the reason that, without possessing means to imitate reality, it soars above terrestrial phenomena into an ideal world and stirs earthly passions with celestial harmony. I repeat—music is an ideal art, not an imitative one. The language of music is common to all peoples, because it speaks to the heart. While word and gesture reflect exactly and concretely the details of passion, music sets itself a loftier aim. It is, so to speak, the moral atmosphere (*atmosfera morale*) that fills the space wherein the characters of the drama live and move. Music assumes the rôle of the destiny that pursues these personages, of the hope that inspires them, the joy that surrounds them, the doom that shall be theirs; and all this in a manner indefinable, yet so moving that words and gestures cannot express it. Dramatic music is the *locum-tenens*—*nota bene*, not the imitator!—of those things which, without being the true cause of a passion, nevertheless provoke that passion in us by their own motion, because they either foresee or accompany the cause, or enter into combination with it. For instance, in the last act of *Otello*, before the hero appears for the tragic consummation of his jealous rage, I let the music by itself, independently of the words, prepare the mood of the auditors for the terrible scene. This potency of expression the composer himself must feel; one does not learn it in school, neither can it be taught by rules. The tones are merely elements of the rhythm. The composer's mastery is displayed by his disposition in his own mind of the principal scenes of the opera, keeping in view the emotions, the characters, the moral aim, and the final catastrophe. He must artistically accommodate the character of his music to the dramatic subject and invent a really new rhythm (if he is able), a rhythm of novel efficiency (if he can), but, in any event, a rhythm that shall express the character of the drama and go hand in hand with the most important situations, the persons, the emotions. He will follow the words only to the point of bringing the melody into agreement with them, without departing from the general character of the music, which he will have established in such wise that the words shall serve the music rather than the music the words. In a tragic scene, the words may at one moment be sorrowful, at another hopeful, and again they may express a prayer or a threat, according as the poet intends to intensify the scene from step to step. But if the composer tries to follow the sense of the words at a similar pace, he will not create a music convincing by its own expression, but a poverty-stricken, vulgar music in a sort of mosaic style, disconnected or absurd.

These remarks of Rossini's were prophetic of the mistakes made by the succeeding generations. They supply the key to the fact that so many old operas are still effective and that so few new ones live. So it comes that the two greatest admirers of Rossini among the philosophers, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (for that matter, Hegel too was an ardent worshipper of Rossini), have supported him in opposition to the more recent music-drama.

Schopenhauer, who praised Rossini in his principal work because he had (intentionally, too!) never gone astray into descriptive music, but had always cultivated the expression of emotion, sent through a mutual friend (Dr. Wille) a message to Wagner saying that the latter had better let music alone, for he (Schopenhauer) remained true to Rossini! And Nietzsche, who wanted to "mediterraneanize" music ("il faut méditerraniser la musique"), thought that, next to Bizet, Rossini with his "overflowing animality" was the foremost representative of antique meridional naturalism. Contrariwise, for him Wagner's art was "the music without a future": "The age of national wars, this whole entr'acte character now prevailing in European affairs, may indeed beget a burst of glory for such art as that of Wagner, without insuring it a future."

In contrast, Nietzsche declared that the true "artist of the future" would be the musician who could speak the language of Rossini and Mozart like his mother-tongue—that caressing, wild folk-speech, now mild, now uproarious—that music with its roguish indulgence for anything and everything, even "vulgarity."

Once again, as a century ago, exhausted Europe is bleeding from a thousand wounds, and its unhappy populations yearn, after long years of warfare, for peace, for the reposeful joys of life and love. Once again the time is ripe for the art of Rossini—for the music of the old Rossini and, it well may be, for that of a new one. Shall such music—"serene and profound as an afternoon in October, unique, wanton, caressing, a sweet little woman full of grace and guile," such as Nietzsche desired—ever again be ours? Will One arise once more who shall liberate us from a descriptive, philosophizing music, and satisfy our souls and senses through the all-compelling might of melodious song? The answer to this question we have from—Wagner: "Ay, if Rossinis were only always to be had! But I fear—the stock is exhausted."

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

ON STYLE AND MANNER IN MODERN COMPOSITION

By CHARLES LOUIS SEEGER, JR.

I

I SUBMIT, as a fundamental definition in any sound critique of music, that *style* is to be recognised upon the basis of the balanced articulation of all the essential resources of technique, in contrast with *manner*, which is to be recognised upon the basis of the special cultivation of a few of the resources and the comparative neglect of the others.

The resources of musical technique may be resumed concisely and comprehensively as the functioning of the physical materials of the art (tonal and rhythmic) in the three main branches of composition (melody, harmony and form) or, in other words, the manipulation of the former by the latter. By the articulation of the resources I mean their fitting together in composition. By a balanced articulation I mean the equal stressing and developing of all resources.

Style, therefore, will tend to close-knit or *organic* composition; manner, to loose or *diffuse* composition.

The distinction between the terms "organic" and "diffuse" lies in the extent of the development of the *strict implication of a subject*. In organic composition (e.g., fugues of Bach and some symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms) a minimum of material constitutes, through its elaborate and thorough development, a large part of the whole. In diffuse composition, the presentation of a maximum of material precludes the specific development of any particular unit. A minimum of material is clearly presented in the comparatively small number of measures comprising the commencement of a phrase, section or piece. If this is developed, as in organic composition, it may be called a subject; if not, there is no need for a special designation. Of course, any subject can be shown to imply any conceivable collection of tones and beats. Strictness of implication, then, is important as denoting the orderly procedure of musical logic, not accident of whim or the artifice of pedantry.

II

We may qualify the above definition concerning style and manner only in view of two sets of conditions, viz: (a) the situation in the art of music at a given time (and, possibly, place) and (b) the character of a given composer.

(a) The present situation in the history of occidental music may be likened to the situation in the case of a broad stream, when, in flat country, many islands divide its current into many streamlets. Perhaps, some of the streamlets become so shallow that they dry away; others lose themselves in bogs; others join, attract tributaries and make a river again. The last "grand style"¹ has gradually split apart. Those who attempt to continue or recreate it are like the streamlets that run dry or end in a bog—a bog haunted by vain historical and archeological ghosts. The Romantic movement has long emphasised the worth of individual differences in contrast to the conforming to a divine norm—the unique in contrast to the universal. Thus we have, instead of one great style, many manners, each one so different from the other as to be nearly unintelligible to any but its special devotees. Each composer who has produced valuable work during the last half century has done it by emphasising a few of the resources of technique in which he was especially apt, while neglecting (comparatively speaking) the improvement of his weak points. Our technique has been enriched to a point bewildering both to those who know and those who do not know that nobody living can be said to have the skill to use it as a whole. One cannot but admire and prize the outstanding work of the twentieth century, nor can one, on the other hand, ignore the suspicion that the producers of it reached rather prematurely the end of their rope. Of the attempt to initiate a new grand style not much can be said. Any prediction for which pure divination is not claimed, should assume the character of the scientific hypothesis, prove capable of subjection to searching analysis and await with enthusiastic interest the event of its verification or rejection by musical fact. Such an hypothesis might be: (1) in the not too distant future a great style will emerge by the gradual reordering and consolidation of the scattered strands of musical technique;

¹I believe it is convenient to recognise three "grand styles": I. Des Prés—Palestrina, or even as late as Sweelinck; II. Bach—Händel; III. Mozart—Brahms, including, of course, Wagner. The use of names instead of dates gives us a little more familiar, though more controversial, classification than the somewhat more precise nature of dates, or centuries. The resemblance, however, between the first and last (roughly, the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries) contrasts strikingly with the second (roughly, the first half of the eighteenth).

(2) the romantic tendency may persist for some time before this eventuality can be said to be clearly envisaged; (3) we may hasten the breakup of the romantic tendency (in so far as it assumes unlimited control of taste) by carrying to an extreme its salient characteristics; (4) we may resurrect and develop the neglected resources until such a time as the over-emphasised resources can be stabilised and coördinated with them.

This would be a process of Pasteurisation. The attenuated form of the bacillus romanticus would be cultivated and used to inoculate the victims of our worst musical epidemic—the cult of wrong notes. The revolutionary-minded who loves to have his progress catastrophically dished would have his place under caption (3); for we are not impatient with what Debussy, Schönberg, Scriabin and Stravinsky *have* done in the enlarging of musical technique, but with what they have *not* done—that is, what no one seems to be able to do, to be as enterprising in all the resources of technique as these masters have been in the two or three they have spent all their time in developing. The conservative advocate of gradual change would have his place in caption (4). The foolish controversy between conservative and radical could be smoothed out so that at least being one's own worst enemy would not be the only thing they held in common. And best of all, the maundering cult of ninth-chord writers would be hipped on both sides.

The present situation is in some ways very like the situation in Europe during the opening years of the seventeenth century. Not long before, the great stream was undivided. Composers had spoken not of "expressing themselves" but of how a supernatural being moved their hands in the achievement of a purpose loftier than their poor earthly minds could conceive. But eventually young men found the stream too serene, even sluggish—too stiff, possibly frozen. They forsook the grand style and deliberately tried to formulate outside of it a procedure almost arbitrarily opposed to the salient characteristics of the work of Palestrina, Lasso and the others. Of course, the grand style had, even in the hands of Palestrina himself, begun to lose its vitality. His style seldom shows as strong a melodic flow in the various parts as his best predecessors (Des Prés, for example), but is predominantly chordal. The instrumental and solo-dramatic genres adopted by the *nuove musiche* had been gradually taking form during his lifetime and were not by any means made of whole cloth by the early opera writers. There was, nevertheless, a deliberate and successful revolution whose result was the obliteration

of the old style in less than half a century. Out of it came a century of experiment and gradual consolidation that made possible the grand style of Bach and his contemporaries. The twentieth century sometimes seems to promise a repetition (in reverse order, however) of the seventeenth. During the nineteenth century the tendency was not toward crystallisation, but toward volatility; not by too severe restrictions but by too great license it dissipated its efforts. Formerly, the art tended to become too highly organised for the young artist and courtier: there was need to simplify it and reach a wider audience. Recently, the audience has become nearly as large as it can be, but in being distributed to that audience the resources of the technique have also been distributed and the former style diffused. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the revolt against the closed circuit of strict counterpoint centered in the freeing of melody from the rules of its association with other melodies, substituting block chords instead. But since then, the free melodic line has become enthralled to the increased complexity of the chordal support. Counterpoint is therefore to us, what chords were to the *nuove musiche*.

(b) The second qualification of the fundamental definition regarding style and manner need not be as elaborately set forth as the general historical qualification given under section (a). But it is necessary to say a few words regarding the mutual adjustment of the two qualifications themselves.

It is unfortunately true that the recognition of personal differences is far more common in the music profession to-day than is the recognition of the evolutionary approach to music. That is, it is more common to adhere to the "great man theory" to account for what has happened and to predict what is to come than it is to view the art as proceeding along a logical path of development partly moulded by forces from without (social, economic, mechanical, etc.) and partly following out an organic life of its own, both more or less independent of the efforts of men as individuals. Broadly speaking, the two theories should be concurrently employed. Reliance upon the first only is characteristic of the intellectually lazy; reliance upon the second serves only too often as a smoke-screen for the sciolist. We should not say the times make the man or the man makes the times. The fallacies of both have been long apparent. It is wiser to distribute the explanation fairly evenly between the two. Possibly, it may be a century before the technique of music will be balanced sufficiently (by many good workers) to allow the turning out by one man of a body of work comparable to the work of Bach, Beethoven

or Palestrina. It may be that if that man lived sooner he would not be able to do such work. Yet maybe no matter when he lived he might do it.

The same is true of more detailed analysis. Perhaps, for instance, only Debussy could have made of the whole-tone scale what he did. But on the other hand, perhaps about the same thing would have been done had Debussy died in his first childhood.

The closeness with which any individual composer may approach the ideal balance required by our definition of style depends (after his position in history has been allowed for) upon two things: first, the nature of his talent, and second, his ability to give it or receive for it discipline such as will improve it. He has, in no case, a perfectly balanced talent. For instance, in some the tonal may outweigh the rhythmic, or the melodic the harmonic, and vice versa. In some, sensitivity is more highly developed than imagery, and so on through an imposing list of possibilities. He can, however, make some correction for his native lack of balanced musicianship, and it is here that our custom of talking and writing about music plays a very important rôle. For many of these abstract terms are not clearly defined or definable for musical use. Slovenly treatment of music by language does no good and maybe much harm. A sound musicology must meet not only the requirements of language logic, and, of course, musical truth, but must always be careful to make clear its own relation to actual creative work in music.

All this creative work is done in three periods. First, there is the period of *prevision*—the acquisition of the idiom, the knowledge of the possibilities of the technique, their coördination and the maturing of the taste or critical judgment that selects what to use, when and how to use it, by actual practice. Second, there is the period of vision or inspiration, as we call it—direct artistic outpouring, concentrated and partly at least defying analysis in words. Third, there is the period of *revision* of the inspired work in terms of the first process.

The first and third periods, when not interrupted by flashes of the second or approximations of it, tend to be cool, deliberate and experimental. In the third, the larger part of the labor involved in any specific composition is done. Any attempt to discipline the talent through the study of the technique is primarily concerned with these two periods.

The second period is apt to be heated and hasty, though it undoubtedly varies greatly in character among composers. It

seems to be influenced by discipline, but we do not know much about the processes.

In composition of the intellectual or deliberately methodical type, the second period tends to be dominated by the first and much modified by the latter. In composition of the opposite type, it tends to dominate the others. Thus, Schönberg's music even at its best (and a great deal of Bach) is something we admire. It satisfies our curiosity and stimulates our intellectual life. But it does not stimulate a lively emotional reaction, and, as an afterthought, we often blush that we "like" music that moves us so little. And so, Puccini, even at his best moments, stirs our vitals—we grow hot and cold, feel tears and choking sensations—but after it is over we are apt to have contempt for ourselves for having been moved so by what we cannot admire.

Reliance upon one or the other of these extremes has conditioned most of the important contributions of modern mannerism; it is conceivable, however, that some of us should want to see our work rewarded by both types of reaction and so neutralise the unpleasant afterthoughts. They have been combined before in all great styles, but rarely, and then sporadically, at times when there was no great style. "One must have both the heart and the head," we say (as if you could separate them!). One cannot write inspired music by the most patient cerebration any more than one can write a fine *ricercar* by the most thrilling inspiration. Periods of inspiration are apt to be short, incomplete and difficult to re-induce. The characteristics of prevision and revision must, on the other hand, be sustained, consistent and calculated.

III

The existence of a great style does not imply anything regarding the existence of *genres* or various types of music for various classes of people or various occasions. All the present genres would reflect a grand style, but it is the task of one genre, namely, that one which pursues the highest refinement of the art—the magisterial *ricercar*—to prepare the ground for this style, and it is with the disciplining or rather self-disciplining of this genre that the present suggestions are offered. In other genres preparatory work is undoubtedly done, but less deliberately; and there is reason to believe that modern ideas of pedagogy will tend as far as conscious effort is concerned to look rather to the *ricercar* than to the street song or salon piece for guidance.

At all times when there has been a great style, there has been a close relation between the pedagogy and the living art. The

living art was visible to the neophyte all through his initiation—his first exercises, prototypes of the work he eventually, if successful, achieved. It was so in Palestrina's, in Bach's and in Beethoven's day. But now, the teaching of composition (why is it called "theory"?) is a purgatory to be survived, if possible—and few do. It is a thing to be different from, a dead historical abstraction, even to comparatively orthodox writers. It forms the basis for the work of some distinguished epigones, but even they fear the reproach that they are not "modern," and doctor the orthodox chord-connections or weaken the contrapuntal texture by mere polyphony to the practical negation of the tenets of textbooks.

Reducing our adverse criticism to its simplest form it is surprising to find it substantially the same as that which we advanced against the principal monuments of the last half century of composition—a half century largely hostile, consciously hostile, to its pedagogy. Both the pedagogy and the resulting composition that presumably revolted against it stress the same resources, namely, the tonal harmony. It is only fair to say that the pedagogy has shown the greater balance and the composition a greater imagination; but the general attitude of both has been to explore deliberately and thoroughly the art of the combination of tones (recall the study of "harmony" as it is studied to-day), the art of dynamics (especially shading) and the combination of varied timbres (color or tone-values), while the use of the rest has been left to convention or accident. One of the peculiar means—I cannot say methods—by which accident has been brought about is the arbitrary negation of convention, the mere determination to be different from it in some respect. Thus, as long as a piece ended in *some* other key than it began in, fell into any phraseology not four-by-four, or as long as its melody did not end with finality but faded away, to that extent it was "modern." This is the cult of wrong notes.

Resources involving rhythmic materials, and in general the melodic and phraseological branches of the technique, have been practically ignored in the pedagogy and left to chaos in composition—an interesting phenomenon in the breaking down of a worn-out style, but certainly not necessary of indefinite extension. Rhythmically we exist to-day in a state comparable to the state of tonal development at the time of Hucbald. In the perception and ordering of differences of pitch, we accept as consonant combinations roughly approximating the ratio 3-5 (read "three against five"), the major sixth, 5-8, the minor sixth, etc. But

these ratios in rhythm can be said to be liked by few and recognisable or performable by fewer. As to tonal dissonance that allows the sounding and appreciation of combinations such as 8-15, the major seventh, it is unreasonable to expect rhythmic harmony to contemplate the ratio for some years to come. Most of our rhythmic material is based upon the homologue of the relation of the fundamental to its partials—i.e., several against one, rather than upon the relations between the partials as in tonal distinctions.

In the study of form there is no adequate treatment of modern procedure, no treatment of the possibilities of arrangement, but rather a superficial prescription of the forms of fifty or a hundred years ago. In the writing of melody has been the greatest falling off. I have not heard of a pedagogy that has successfully combatted the universal tendency to apoplectic abbreviation in thematic construction or the incessant breaking down of the "flow" in longer melodic work. Even in the class-room the bulk of the melodic invention depends almost wholly upon fancy.

I must not be understood as wanting to rule out fancy. What I object to is all the order being in one or two places and all the fancy (only too often on crutches) in others. Both order and fancy are hampered by such lack of balance, and friction follows. The ideal would seem to be the equal presence of both, finely coordinated, in each resource, for ultimately—and originally, too—they depend, for their very existence, upon each other.

The desideratum that any discipline in composition should offer the student, from the very beginning, a prototype of the sort of work he eventually wishes to do cannot, then, in a day when mannerism is supreme, be met. For, unlike the style (which lasts for some time), the manner changes before the student matures. All we can do, if we accept the hypothesis above advanced, is to consider ourselves in a transition stage. Hence, our main occupation should be to allow for the commensurate development of all the essential resources by outlining a set of *preparatory disciplines* by which we may hope to correct the disparity now existing and prepare a way for their more balanced articulation at the hands of someone who is able and at a time ripe for the undertaking.

Such a set of disciplines would serve, in a way, as a temporary substitute for the unattainable style they aim eventually to establish and at the same time would serve as a corrective for the mannerisms against which they revolt. Work in them would, indeed, be half stylistic and half manneristic, and while it might have the propædæutical virtues of both it might just as easily suffer the corresponding drawbacks of both. It should attempt to com-

promise or balance between tradition and experiment; as much would depend upon what in its tradition were accepted, what rejected, as upon what untouched possibilities were explored and what left untouched. Like their homologues, the non-Euclidean geometries, they might sometimes carry the disciple pretty far from the beaten track. But as long as their pursuit were continued in the spirit of sound musicianship (i.e., talent plus appropriate training), good might be expected of them. Where there is no talent, there is no need of discipline. We do not, of course, any longer need to tolerate the old hard and fast divisions into talented and not talented. We know that all approximately normal human beings have a ratable musical talent. The discipline should, of course, conform to the talent; but it should in all cases balance between the drawing upon tradition (regardless of date) and the founding of a new one—between having ancestors and being one.

MUSSORGSKY'S LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS

By M.-D. CALVOCORESSI

IT is only many years after Mussorgsky's death, and at a time when students had almost given up the hope of any addition to the somewhat scanty biographical materials provided by Stassof (in his pamphlet of 1881) and a few other writers, that his correspondence—which constitutes an invaluable source of information on his life, his works, and his ideals—began to be published. His letters to Stassof appeared in book form in 1911. Those to others have not yet been collected, but are to be found scattered in the columns of the *Russian Musical Gazette* (now, unfortunately, almost unprocurable).

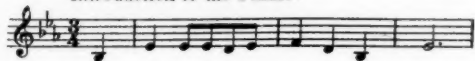
The letters to Balakiref, his master and friend, refer to the early period of his life. In June, 1858 (he was then nineteen years of age), occurs the first mention of a musical composition—a piano-forte Sonata—undertaken upon Balakiref's advice:

I have begun writing the Sonata, which is in E flat major. I am striving hard to do well. My idea is to start with a short introduction in B major, and lead up to the *Allegro* by means of a pedal-point. I am also laying the foundations for the *Scherzo*; and I devote my hours of leisure to the practice of harmony: I do so long to write correctly!
. . . Cui is constantly at Bamberg's house. I played there the Overture to *Edipus* and a few motives which are to be used in the sequel. They satisfied Bach, apparently—which is very gratifying.¹

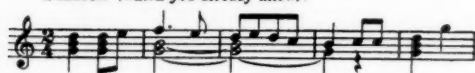
In the following August he writes:

Kito² and I are having a good time in the country. There has been a popular festival—a fine one—on the occasion of a wedding. So I have decided to write my Sonata in E flat major, and to inscribe it to the young couple. Here are motives from it:

Introduction to the Finale:



Scherzo (which you already know):



¹"Bach," a nickname for Stassof; Bamberg was Cui's father-in-law.

²Probably Mussorgsky's brother, Philaret.

Allegro of the Finale



The other motives exist, but I have not yet decided how to work them out. I brought them back from the country. Now I am writing a very simple little Sonata in F sharp minor; I have composed a few songs.¹

. . . I am reading Gluck's *Alceste*, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, and *Armide*; *Cinna*, and to-day I finished reading Mozart's *Requiem*. I play Beethoven's Sonatas, which are new to me. I liked the "Quasi Fantasia" very much.

My brain is full of *Œdipus*; and as I intend to inscribe the work to you, dear friend, I am thinking it all out with the utmost care.

It is interesting to encounter, in a letter of July, 1859, the following account of Mussorgsky's first impressions of Moscow—the city whose historical sites were to provide settings for his lyric dramas "Khovanshtchina" and "Boris Godunof."

At last I have seen Moscow! From the very outset I realised its original character. The towers, the cupolas of the churches positively reek of bygone times. The Red Gates are very quaint; I beheld them with delight. . . . How beautiful the Kremlin! I could not help being struck with awe. . . . My impressions of the Church of Vassili Blajenni were altogether enjoyable, and strange: I felt that at any moment the bolars of yore, in their long coats and high headgear, might appear before my eyes. . . . You know I was a cosmopolitan: but having seen Moscow, I am so to speak re-born; and everything Russian is very close to me now.

In September, 1860, Mussorgsky writes from Petrograd to Balakiref, then in Nijni-Novgorod:

My illness lasted until August; ever since May I have been weak and upset, and unable to do much. I collected a few materials which I shall need some day. *Œdipus* and the Sonata have made a little headway. The Sonata is almost finished. The middle section needs a little polishing; the Coda came out well. I have written two choruses for *Œdipus*: an Andante in B flat minor, followed by an Allegro in E flat major, which belong to the introductory scene, and are being written.

¹Neither of the Sonatas was ever finished. The songs are to be found in the manuscript purchased by Charles Malherbe in 1909, and now in the library of the Paris Conservatoire (See M.-D. Calvocoressi, *Moussorgsky*. Paris. 2d Edition [1911] p. 247). Of the projected opera *Œdipus* only a few fragments were written.

I have also been given a most interesting piece of work to do, which must be ready by next summer: a whole act of *The Bare Mountain* (after Megden's drama *The Witch*), the assembly of the witches, various episodes of witchcraft, the pageant of all the sorcerers, and a finale, the witch-dance and homage to Satan. The libretto is very fine. I have already a few materials for the music, and it may be possible to turn out something very good.

I have written a few small things: a song, "Master of my life," which I think came out quite well, and a *Kinder-Scherzo*, which has greatly pleased Gussakovsky.¹

Dear friend, you must be glad of the change which has taken place within me, and which no doubt is strongly reflected in my music. My mind is stronger: I have reverted to realities, and of mysticism, at the present time, not a trace remains. The last of my mystical achievements is that chorus, *Andante B minor*, for the introduction to *Œdipus*. I have, thank God, recovered my health.

The illness and the mystical tendencies mentioned in the above letter are referred to in a letter of October, 1859. In February, 1860, Mussorgsky had written:

Thank God, I begin to feel better after a period of excruciating sufferings, physical and mental.

But the correspondence affords no definite information as to the nature of his illness. Although it is impossible to say whether ill-health led him to intemperance or was the consequence of excesses, there is reason to favour the former supposition.

In September, 1862, Mussorgsky refers to the financial difficulties against which the remainder of his life will be one long struggle.

Your friendly behest is so imperative, that to ignore it would be unpardonable. I must show my gratefulness by deeds, not by mere words. Were I without food and without hope, my reply would be such as might be expected from a human being at bay. But, dear friend, in my present situation, I consider that I have no right to frighten my friends, and I wish to state my case with all the fairness which their kind attitude towards me calls for.

It is true that my resources have shrunk—but not to such a degree as altogether to prevent my supporting myself. Being accustomed to comfort, and even to a modicum of luxury, I felt anxious, at first, as regards the future, and no wonder I pulled a wry face: anybody would have done the same. I understand the anxiety reflected in your letter, and have full trust in you. But truly, I beg you, I adjure you to set your mind at rest and reassure my kind friends. I cannot bear the thought that they are concerned on my behalf, in consequence of my

¹A pupil of Balakiref.

having conveyed a false impression as to my situation. The notion that I have misled them is most painful to me.

The change in my circumstances has affected me but slightly, and for a short time. Being naturally buoyant, I soon took my stand. My spleen was the outcome, neither of the autumn in the country, nor of my financial affairs. It was an "author's spleen." I am ashamed to acknowledge as much, but here you have the truth: I was embittered by your attitude towards my "Witches." I considered, still consider, and shall consider forever that the thing is satisfactory. After having written various small things of my own, I come forth with a first big work. . . . Whether you agree to produce it or not, dear friend, I shall alter neither plan nor working-out: for both are in close relationship with the contents of the scene, and are carried out in a spirit of genuineness, without tricks or make-believes.

Every author remembers the mood in which he wrote: and that remembrance does a good deal towards helping him to abide by his own standards. I have fulfilled my task as best I could. The one thing I shall alter is the percussion, which I have misused.

The passages referring to the first draft of the tone-poem "A Night on the Bare Mountain" are characteristic of Mussorgsky's unswerving attitude so far as his works were concerned. Throughout his life, he insists that his music must stand or fall on its own merits, and be produced as he wrote it if it is to be produced at all.

That express desire of his has been utterly disregarded so far as a "Night on the Bare Mountain," "Boris Godunov" and a number of other works are concerned. It is not my present intention to go into the ethics of the treatment to which Mussorgsky's works have been submitted after his death. But one can hardly peruse his correspondence without being struck by the persistence with which he stuck to his guns.

The following excerpt from a letter to Rimsky-Korsakof, dated July, 1867, shows that he eventually re-wrote "A Night on the Bare Mountain," but remained unwilling to consider further alterations:

On the eve of St. John's night, June 23, I finished, with God's help, "St. John's Night on the Bare Mountain," a tone-picture consisting of the following episodes: 1) Assembly of the Witches, hubbub and chatter; 2) Satan's pageant; 3) Ceremonies in honour of Satan; 4) Witch-dance. I wrote the score straight away, without preliminary rough draft. I began on June 10th or thereabouts, and on the 23d came the time to rejoice. The work is inscribed to Balakiref by special request—and, I need not add, to my great joy.

Imagine me, dear friend, with the final draft of a score written without one bit of sketching, and my anxiety when I sent the sheets to the binder! Your favourite bits have come out quite well in the scoring, and I have added a good deal to what I wrote. In the "ceremonies,"

for instance, comes a passage which will make Cui say that I ought to attend a musical class. Here it is:



in B minor—the witches glorifying Satan, as you see, nakedly, in all primitive barbarity. In the witch-dance comes the following, rather original call, the strings and piccolo trilling on B flat:



As I said, over a trill on B flat! G minor, over B flat major, alternates in amusing wise with G flat major over B flat minor, with interruptions by the chords in F sharp minor breaking in—a thing which would lead to my expulsion from the class to which Cui would have me consigned for the greater glory of my witches.

As regards plan and form, the work is fairly novel. Introduction in two sections (the witches assemble), motive in D minor with a bit of working-out (their chatter) connected with Satan's train in B flat major (I have been careful to avoid the "Hungarian March" effect); motive of the procession without working-out, but followed by a response in E flat minor (the ribald character, in that key, is most amusing), ending with the whole-tone scale *in moto contrario* which leads to D major. Then comes, in B minor, the glorification, in Russian style, with variations and a semi-ecclesiastic *quasi-trio*; a transition introduces the witch-dance, whose first motive is in D minor, and which also consists of variations in Russian style. At the end of the dance comes the whole-tone scale, and figures from the introduction reappear—which should be rather effective.

You do not know the witch-dance yet: it is compact and glowing. I think the form—variations and calls interspersed—was the most suitable in which to cast that evocation of pother. The general character of the thing is warmth: nothing drags, all is firmly connected without German transitions—which of course would have introduced an element of coldness. Please God, you will hear and judge.

In my opinion, "St. John's Night" is something new, which ought to impress thoughtful musicians favourably. I regret the distance between us two, for I should like us to examine the new-born score together. Let it clearly be understood, however, that I shall never start remodelling

it: with whatever shortcomings it is born, with them it must live if it is to live at all. Yet if we were to talk things over together, a good deal might be made clear, and to good purpose.

In a letter written ten days later (in which he outlines the plan of a tone-poem, "Podibrad," which he never completed), he describes his Intermezzo in B minor (published 1873) as "a mere gift to the Germans, a thing where not himself, but the German, stands forth." But even more characteristic are his remarks upon Rimsky-Korsakof's "Antar" in the second of the two following letters, which refer to his "Marriage-Broker," the admirable comedy of which he was to write but the first act.

From a letter of July 30, 1868:

The first act of "The Marriage-Broker" is completed. You will realize that it means my having worked very hard. . . . I have gone through it afresh. In my opinion, the thing is interestingly carried out. But who can tell? I did my best, and now it is for you all to judge the outcome: I sit in the dock.

Yet there is one thing I must say: if you forgo all the operatic conventions, and imagine, upon the stage, a discourse carried out in music, quite plainly and without self-consciousness, then "The Marriage-Broker" is an opera. In other words, if I have succeeded in my attempt faithfully to reproduce in my music the expressive qualities of the tones in which human beings, whilst speaking, convey their thoughts and feelings, and if my way of doing so is musical and artistic, then the race is won. . . .

I have worked with a will. It just happened: for, whenever I hear people speak, whatever they say, my mind seeks a musical equivalent for their discourse.

From a letter of August 15, 1868:

I have been reducing to order the second, third and fourth scenes of the first act, which I had composed in the country. I hardly expected to do so well. For the first time in my life, I wrote without the assistance of an instrument—that is, actually without being able to verify what I had composed. I had thought that in a thing such as musical prose (which implies extraordinarily erratic harmonic conditions), I should not be able to do without an instrument. But having received your message and Cui's, I simply had to start the fair draft; and I put in order all that I had composed, since it was possible to do so. There are no mistakes. I took great care to do it neatly for your sake, so that it should look well in a binding.

I have started to think of the second act and plan it; but the time has not yet come to compose it. Hurry might result in uniformity of intonation—a sin of sins in the fanciful "Marriage-Broker." But the fortune-telling by cards (the *fiancée* with Zhevakin) is already outlined.

. . . I rejoice for your *Antar*. With regard to your remarks concerning "Power,"¹ I agree that the Eastern conception of power, considered in its externals, is not incompatible with art as we understand it, because it expresses itself mainly in the display of pomp. But as regards the last section, "Love," I object to the introductory bars. In my opinion, to start outright, without preamble of any kind—as you had done before—is more artistic, simpler, more genuine. Is it true indeed that æsthetic taste, after the pompous key of D major has been asserted, calls for the A given by the French horns in order to introduce the melancholic, pathetic D flat major? It is you who speak such things, you, the Glinka of æsthetics (do not blush)! Now what could be more poetical, after the *Forte* in D major, *pomposo* (with which your "Power" ends) than the wistful D flat major, straightway, without any preparation?

If you feel you like the allusion to the Ruins and the Peri,² why not go the whole hog and preface each section with an introduction built upon the motive of the Ruins and that of the Peri? Think how absurd *that* would be. I think that the simpler and more straightforward things are, the better. "Revenge," without preparation; "Power" likewise: but for "Love," you wish to borrow from the Germans! I disagree, and I think I am justified. Remember the ending of your "Sadko"; and learn that after the C sharp minor and D major of "Antar," the key of D flat major carries your hero straight into the clouds, into the world of Houris and Peris where his mind is cleansed and appeased and elevated. O preparations, how much that was good has been ruined by you!

As regards symphonic working-out, let me tell you this: you seem to be appalled because you wrote *à la* Korsakof and not *à la* Schumann. But pray consider that a Russian mess of minced meat and herbs is as execrable to a German as his favourite *Milch-Suppe* or *Kirschen-Suppe* is to us (yes, I know, comparison is no argument!). In short, symphonic working-out, considered from the point of view of technique, is a German product. . . . The German, when thinking, starts by analysing, and then proceeds to demonstrate. Our Russian brother demonstrates forthwith, and subsequently may amuse himself with analysing. When at Borodin's home you showed me "Love," you had indulged in no preparations, and now you begin to do so.

But enough on that point. Let me, dear Korsinka, tell you that the act of creating carries in itself the laws of beauty, whose tale is told by inner criticism, not outer; and whose consequences are determined by the artist's instinct. Where either of those two elements lacks, there can be no artistic creation. For artistic creation implies both, and the artist is a law unto himself.

When an artist starts remodelling, he is not content with contentedly remodelling, and perhaps spoiling a good thing or two in the process. He needs must go on until he ceases to be articulate, and merely chews the cud. And we are omnivorous animals, not mere ruminants.

¹The third movement of *Antar*.

²The opening of the first movement.

³The second movement.

The profession of faith is uncompromising indeed. And it is confirmed in many other letters. For example, in a letter to the sisters Purgold (one of whom was to become Rimsky-Korsakof's wife) of July, 1870, he writes:

There you are: I dislike being advised, because, in my humble opinion, each human being is an individual, and accordingly has much in him which belongs to him alone.

To Stassof, in June, 1872, he wrote:

Admitting that I shun technique, does it mean that I am no good at it? When I eat a good pie, do I want to behold how much butter, how many eggs, cabbages and fishes went to the making of it? The proof of it is in the eating.

Indeed, so long as the composer remains harnessed by conventions, the autocrats of symphonic working-out will continue to reign, enforcing their Talmud as the *alpha* and *omega* of art. Meanwhile, wise people feel that their rules have nothing to do with live art. Let us have space: the world of music is boundless. I do not object to symphony, but to the symphonists, to the incorrigible conservatives.

The correspondence does not help to determine the reasons why Mussorgsky, after successfully completing the first act of "The Marriage-Broker," proceeded no further with the work. It contains little that refers to "Boris Godunof," but a good deal concerning "Khovanshtchina," the first mention of which occurs in 1872.

Offering the inscription of his future score to Stassof, Mussorgsky writes (July, 1872):

I do not care whether it is customary or not to inscribe a work before it is written. I have no fear, and am contemplating the future with confidence. I dedicate to you that period of my life which will be devoted to composing "Khovanshtchina." I may say without fear of ridicule: "I dedicate to you my own self, and my life during that period." For I well recollect how I have *lived* "Boris"; and of the time when I was working at it I carry a fond, unfading remembrance. Now I am beginning to *live* your libretto; how many fine impressions I derive from it! How many new countries to explore!

During the years that follow, letters to Mrs. Karmalina contain interesting particulars as regards his progress with "Khovanshtchina," and his first period of work on "The Fair at Sorochinski."

Mrs. Karmalina had undertaken to assist him in collecting church- and folk-tunes suitable for use in the former score.

July, 1874.

The materials with which you so kindly supplied me are very welcome, and show that in my endeavour to write an historical music-

drama I am following the right line. I refer chiefly to the Old-Believers' tune: it is so characteristic of relentless toil, of unflinching readiness to meet all blows of fate, that I shall not hesitate for one moment to use it *unisono* at the end of "Khovanshtchina," for the scene of the collective suicide at the stake. I fully understand the grace-notes, the *gruppetti*, so to speak; sung in octaves, the chant with those grace-notes will ring wonderfully old and true. The very text, with its pseudo-ecclesiastical colour, is most suitable.

But in the air I hear a voice calling, and "Khovanshtchina" must wait. First to come will be a comic opera, "The Fair at Sorochinski," after Gogol. I am husbanding my creative powers well. Two heavy-weights such as "Boris" and "Khovanshtchina" in succession might prove too much. And the comic opera will have the advantage of providing different characters and a different setting as regards history, locality, and national characteristics.

The elements of Ukrainian songs are so so little known, that incompetent experts consider those songs as counterfeits (counterfeits of *what?*). Of those songs we possess a not inconsiderable number. In short, my work is cut out; may I have the necessary strength and gumption!

Meanwhile, "Khovanshtchina" does not lie fallow. The moods of creative fancy are elusive, more fickle than the most fickle of coquettes; when they come one must seize them, and unreservedly yield to their erratic dictates. And just now I could hardly fail to capture them; for at the very moment when I was beginning to realize that the chant of the Old-Believers should contain grace-notes, you supplied conclusive evidence to that effect.

From a letter of April, 1875:

The folk-songs which you have sent me will not die if I am to live: I shall disseminate them broadcast.

I hardly dare voice thanks. How could I thank you for what is your very vocation, for your unflagging activity in safeguarding the achievements of the people? It is history, and not I, Mussorgsky, who will render thanks for what you are doing for the sake of art. But nobody could be more thankful than I am.

. . . I am hard at work on "Khovanstchina." Many questions have cropped up, some hardly more definite than a tiny bud hidden in a mass of foliage. Yet every one of them must be attended to, in order that the tree be more beautiful, and capable of sheltering a greater number of people. It is hard, but it must be done.

I have given up the Little-Russian opera (i.e., "The Fair at Sorochinski"), the reason being that a Great-Russian cannot successfully masquerade as a Little-Russian. I find it impossible to master the Little-Russian recitative, viz., all the shades and peculiarities of melodic patterns in the musical discourse of Little-Russia. I prefer to go in for less falsehood and more truth. In an opera whose subject is the life and customs of a certain type of people, one should be even more careful and stricter than when dealing with an historical subject: for one lacks the support of the great historical fact whose predominance might help to

divert attention from certain inaccuracies and scoriæ. That is why masters who are not adepts in the matter of the recitative refrain from introducing "tableaux de mœurs" in their historical operas.

I know the Great-Russians to some extent; their mind, sleepy, cunning under its haze of benevolence, is not alien to me—nor is their melancholy disposition.

At present Count Kutusof and I are at work on a "Danse Macabre." Two scenes are ready, a third is in the making, a fourth will follow. I have almost finished the first act of "Khovanshtchina."

The work referred to in the last paragraph is the "Songs and Dances of Death." Mussorgsky did not finally give up "The Fair at Sorochinsi." In 1879 he writes from Yalta to Stassof that every one in Ukraine likes the music which he has written for that work, and considers it entirely true in character. He himself, he adds, has reached the conviction that such is the case. In August, 1880, he writes that he has made many additions to the score (the considerable portion of it which he actually wrote is now published in a careful revision by the composer and critic Viacheslav Karatyghin).

Concerning "Khovanshtchina," he wrote to Stassof (also in August, 1880—that is, seven months before his death):

Our "Khovanshtchina" is finished, except for one little bit in the final scene of the suicide.

and, a few days later:

"Khovanshtchina" is in hand; but the scoring! O ye gods, when shall I find time?

At his death, only the rough draft of the work was completed, minus the final scene (it will be remembered that it was edited and completed by Rimsky-Korsakof; in 1913, a collation by Stravinsky of the original manuscript with the published version gave rise to heated discussion in the Russian and French musical press).

The correspondence of all those years bears testimony as to the scrupulous—at times, perhaps, over-scrupulous—care which he devoted to writing "Khovanshtchina." Here is a curious excerpt from a letter to Stassof (December, 1876):

You know that in "Boris" I have given scenes of the people's life. Now my desire is to prophesy, and what I prophesy is: the melody of life, not that of classicism. I am at work on human speech. With great pains I have just achieved a type of melody evolved from that speech. I have succeeded in merging recitative in melody (apart, of course, from dramatic movements, with which even mere interjection may be compatible). That type I should like to call well thought out
tested

melody. My work rejoices me. Some day, all of a sudden, the unexpected, ineffable song will arise against classical melody (so obsolete now), intelligible to one and all. If I succeed, I shall stand as a conqueror in art—and succeed I must.

A number of letters are devoted to discussing the plan of "Khovanshtchina," the various aspects of each character appearing in the drama, and similar matters. With Stassof's letters to Mussorgsky, the documentary evidence in the light of which a close study of the work might profitably be carried out is available in full. But extracts longer than can be given here, and a careful comparison between Mussorgsky's views and his achievements, would be necessary.

At the end of the volume of Mussorgsky's letters to Stassof, two letters to the same from Mrs. Shestakova (Glinka's sister) are published. The following excerpt (August, 1878) is of great interest from the biographical point of view:

Let us now talk of a man who stands very close to you—of Mussorgsky. I have long refrained from mentioning him to you, for fear of the distress I might cause you. Last week, he appeared at my house in an appalling condition. He stayed quite a long while. Seeing that things were getting worse, I felt I had to do something. In order to spare him whilst protecting myself, I wrote him a letter, asking him not to call on me when suffering from what he calls his nervous disorder. Of course I put it as gently as I could. Yesterday, my dear Mussinka (N. B. pet name for Mussorgsky) appeared, perfectly correct, and gave me his word never to distress me again. We shall see how things go. But for some time at least, I think he will keep himself in hand. I am sorry for him indeed: he has so much in him that is good! If it were possible to detach him from Naumof, I think he might be rescued.

After Mussorgsky's death, Mrs. Shestakova wrote (March 20, 1881):

Mussorgsky will live in my memory forever, not only as the author of "Boris," but as an exceptional, kind, sincere, and affectionate man.

As can be seen from the above excerpts, there is still plenty of work for Mussorgsky's biographers. Mr. Nikolai Findeisen, the patient and most scholarly editor of the *Russian Musical Gazette*, and with him Mr. Viacheslav Karatyghin, who has devoted his utmost care to preparing Mussorgsky's posthumous works, recently discovered, for publication, have deserved well of all those who admire the author of "Boris Godunof."

